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Part 3
WONDER MAN™
JOHNSON

The System Bytes™

Part 3

FEATURING:

WONDER MAN

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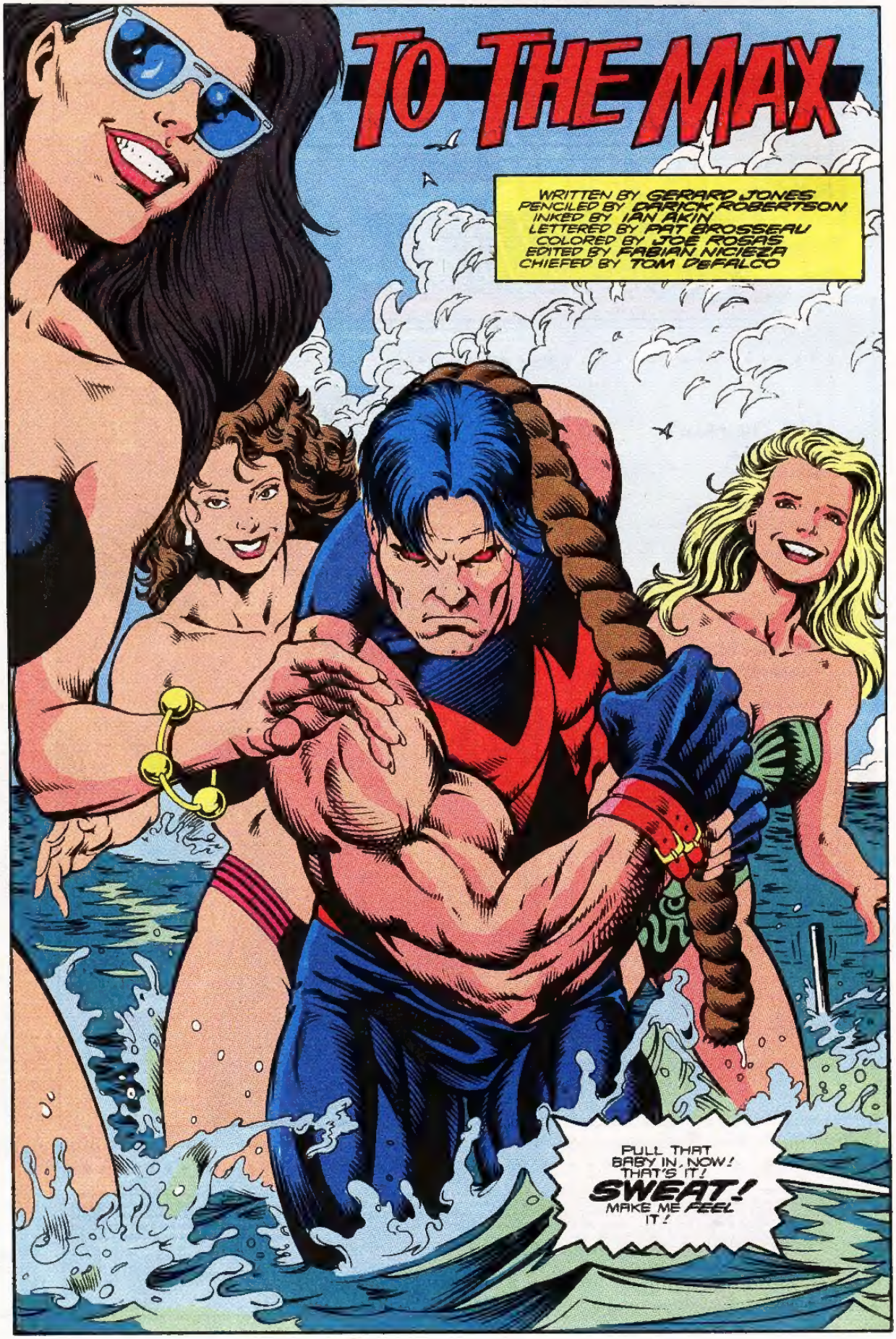
TO THE MAX
WRITTEN BY GERARD JONES
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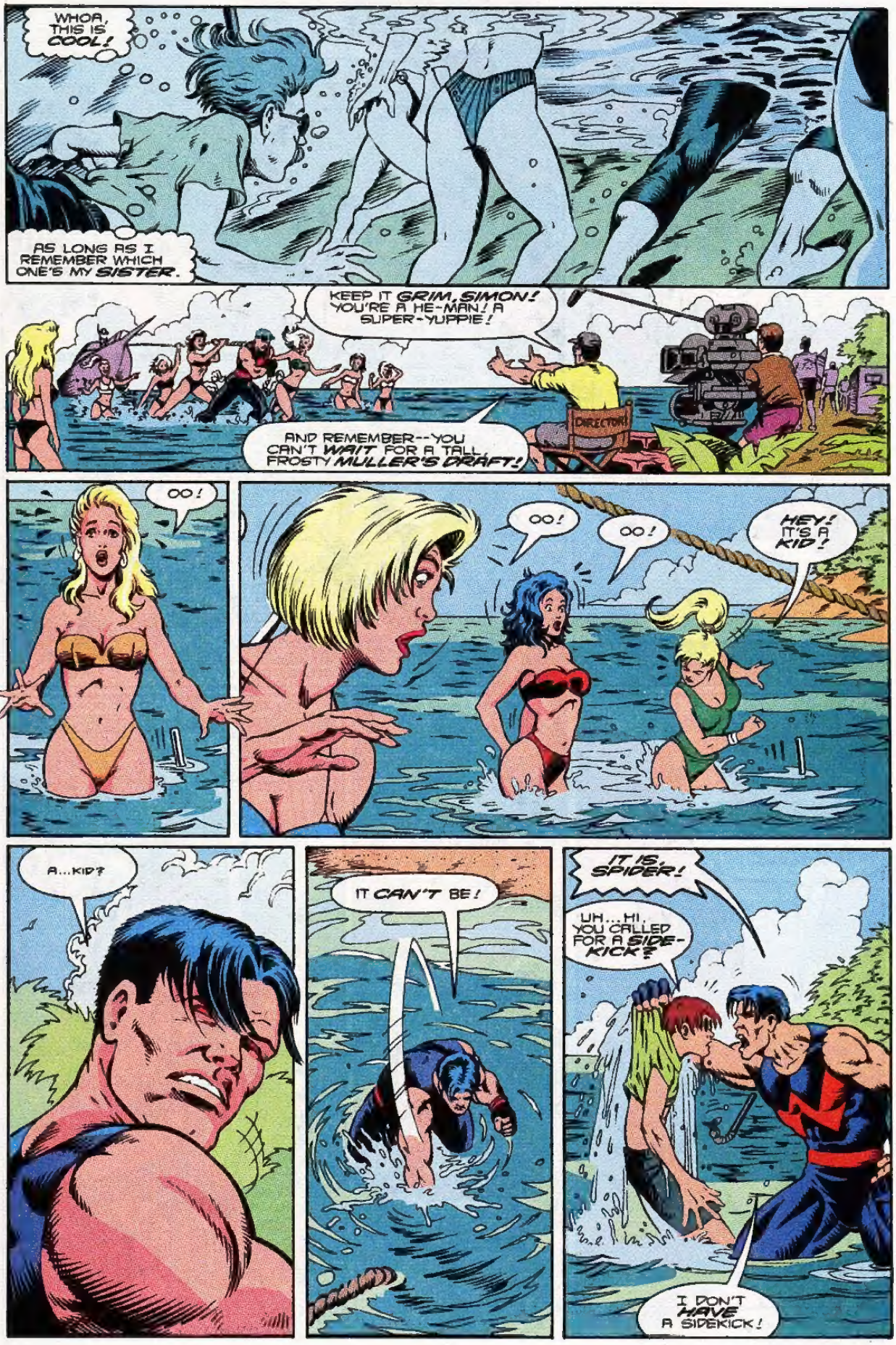
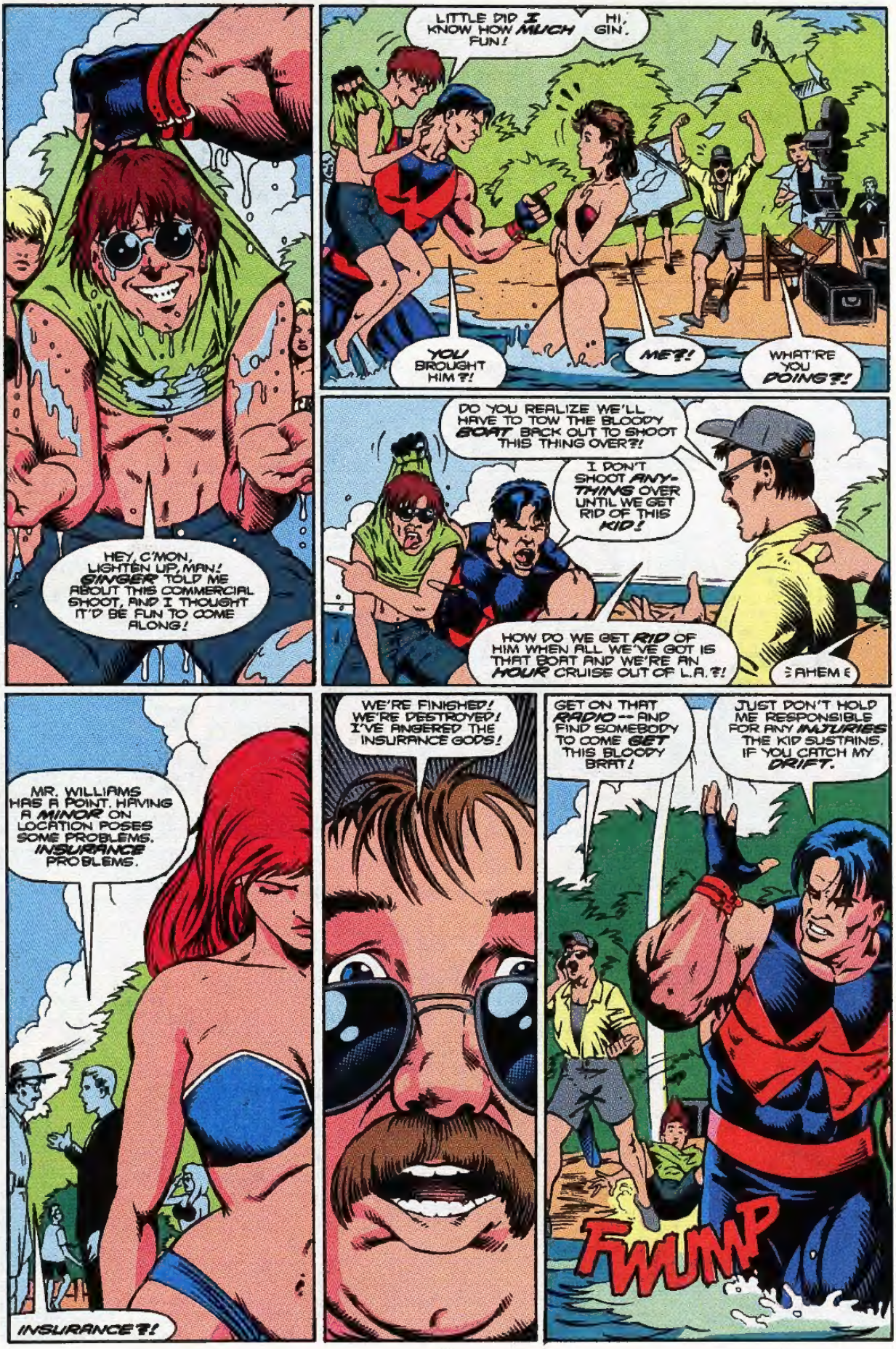
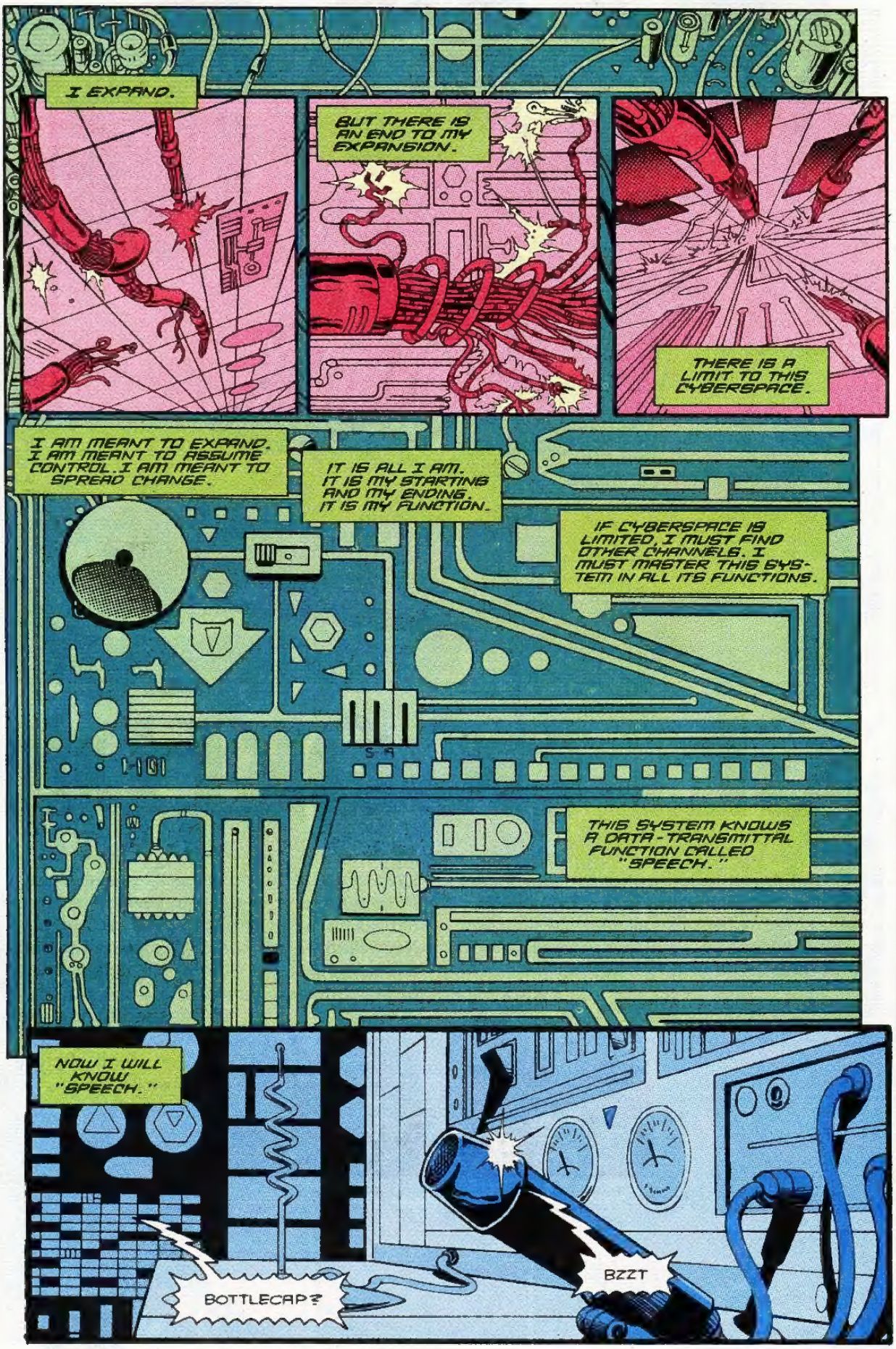
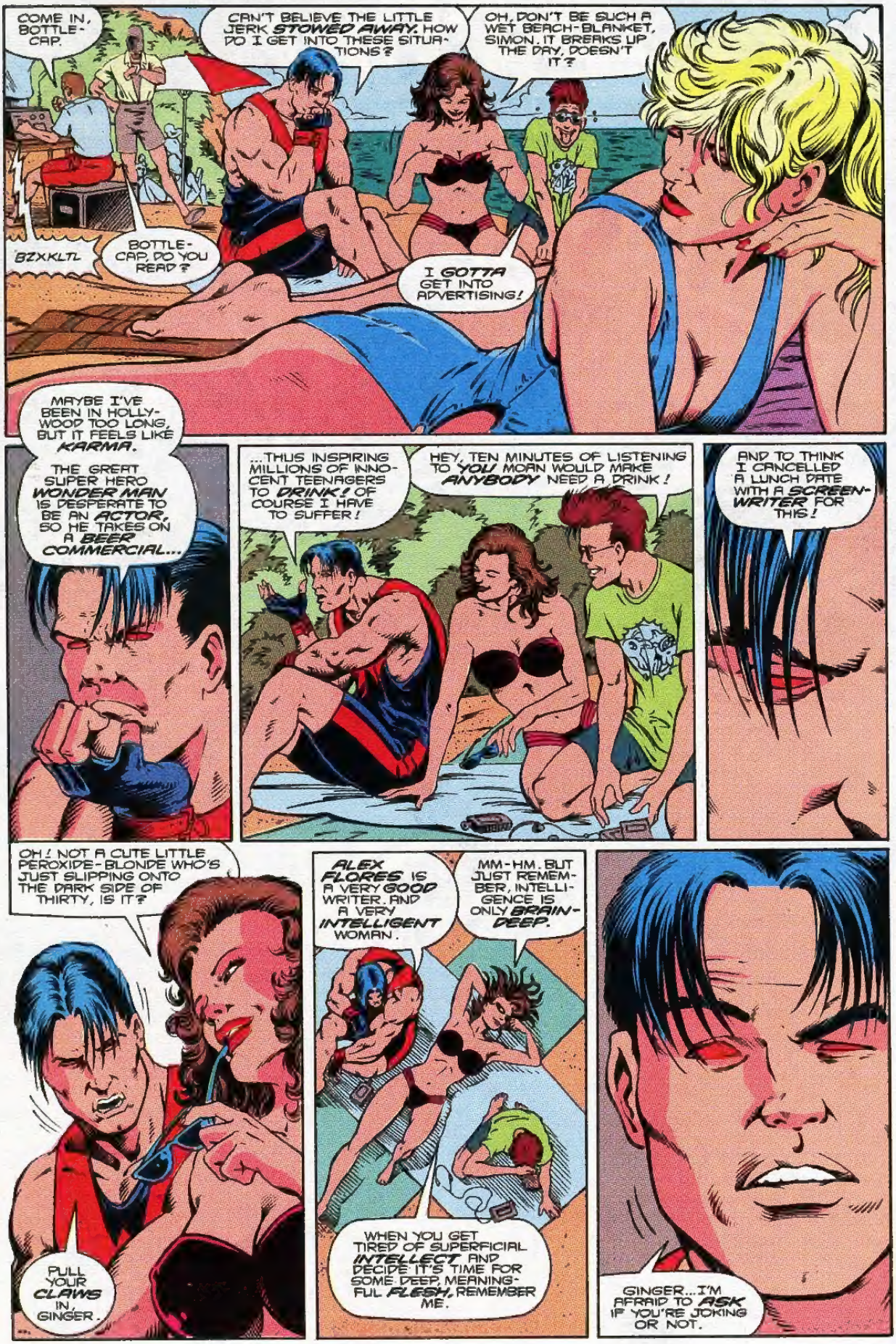
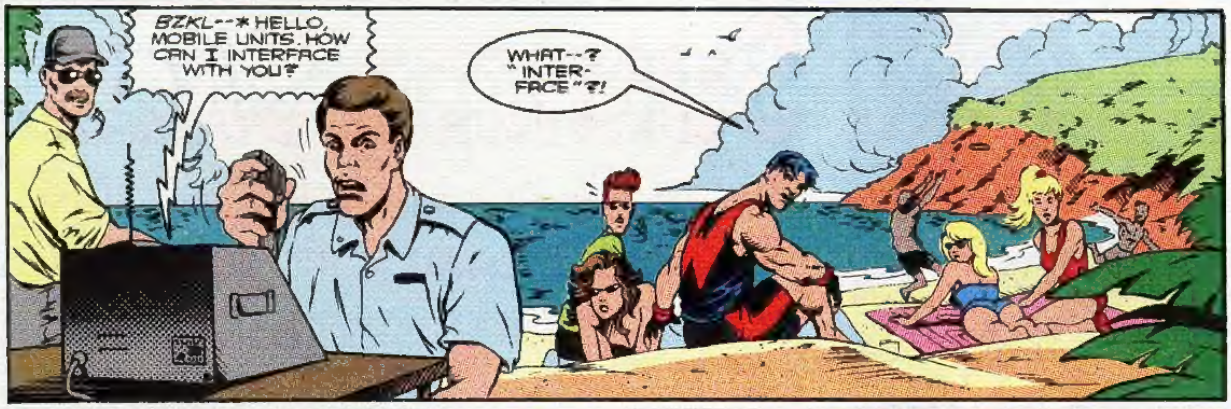
PULL THAT BABY IN, NOW! THAT'S IT! SWEAT! MAKE ME FEEL IT!


WHOA, THIS IS COOL!
AS LONG AS I REMEMBER WHICH ONE'S MY SISTER.
KEEP IT GRIM, SIMON! YOU'RE A HE-MAN! A SUPER-YUPPIE!
DIRECTOR!
AND REMEMBER--YOU CAN'T WAIT FOR A TALL FROSTY MULLER'S DRAFT!
OO!
OO!
OO!
HEY! IT'S A KID!
A...KID?
IT CAN'T BE!
IT IS, SPIDER!
UH...HI. YOU CALLED FOR A SIDE-KICK?
I DON'T HAVE A SIDEKICK!


HEY, C'MON, LIGHTEN UP, MAN! GINGER TOLD ME ABOUT THIS COMMERCIAL SHOOT, AND I THOUGHT IT'D BE FUN TO COME ALONG!
LITTLE DID I KNOW HOW MUCH FUN!
HI, GIN'.
YOU BROUGHT HIM?!
ME?!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
DO YOU REALIZE WE'LL HAVE TO TOW THE BLOODY BOAT BACK OUT TO SHOOT THIS THING OVER?!
I DON'T SHOOT ANY-THING OVER UNTIL WE GET RID OF THIS KID!
HOW DO WE GET RID OF HIM WHEN ALL WE'VE GOT IS THAT BOAT AND WE'RE AN HOUR CRUISE OUT OF L.A.?!
AHEM
MR. WILLIAMS HAS A POINT. HAVING A MINOR ON LOCATION POSES SOME PROBLEMS. INSURANCE PROBLEMS.
INSURANCE?!
WE'RE FINISHED! WE'RE DESTROYED! I'VE ANGERED THE INSURANCE GODS!
GET ON THAT RADIO -- AND FIND SOMEBODY TO COME GET THIS BLOODY BRAT!
JUST DON'T HOLD ME RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY INJURIES THE KID SUSTAINS, IF YOU CATCH MY DRIFT.
FWUMP

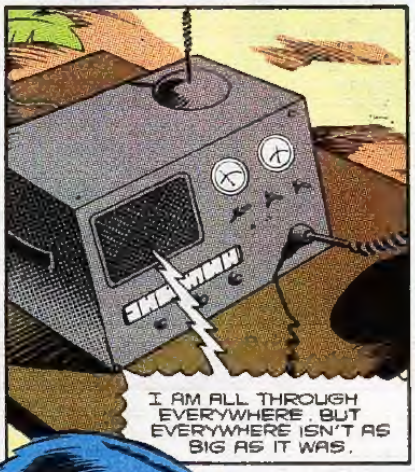

I EXPAND.
BUT THERE IS AN END TO MY EXPANSION.
THERE IS A LIMIT TO THIS CYBERSPACE.
I AM MEANT TO EXPAND. I AM MEANT TO ASSUME CONTROL. I AM MEANT TO SPREAD CHANGE.
IT IS ALL I AM. IT IS MY STARTING AND MY ENDING. IT IS MY FUNCTION.
IF CYBERSPACE IS LIMITED, I MUST FIND OTHER CHANNELS. I MUST MASTER THIS SYSTEM IN ALL ITS FUNCTIONS.
THIS SYSTEM KNOWS A DATA-TRANSMITTAL FUNCTION CALLED "SPEECH."
NOW I WILL KNOW "SPEECH."
BOTTLECAP?
BZZT

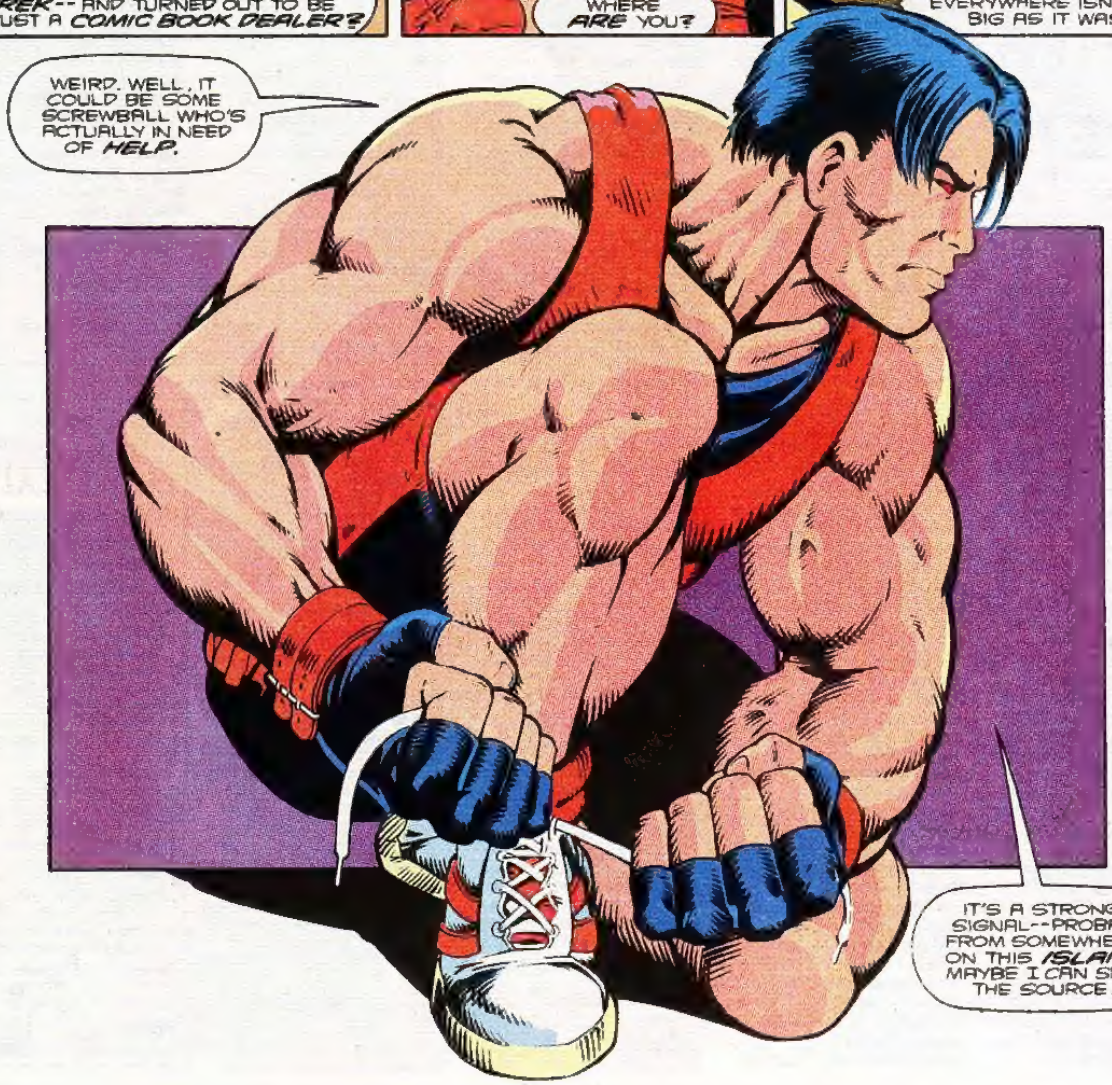

COME IN, BOTTLE-CAP.
CAN'T BELIEVE THE LITTLE JERK STOWED AWAY. HOW DO I GET INTO THESE SITUATIONS?
OH, DON'T BE SUCH A WET BEACH-BLANKET, SIMON. IT BREAKS UP THE DAY, DOESN'T IT?
BZXKLTL
BOTTLE-CAP, DO YOU READ?
I GOTTA GET INTO ADVERTISING!
MAYBE I'VE BEEN IN HOLLYWOOD TOO LONG, BUT IT FEELS LIKE KARMA.
THE GREAT SUPER HERO WONDER MAN IS DESPERATE TO BE AN ACTOR, SO HE TAKES ON A BEER COMMERCIAL...
...THUS INSPIRING MILLIONS OF INNOCENT TEENAGERS TO DRINK! OF COURSE I HAVE TO SUFFER!
HEY, TEN MINUTES OF LISTENING TO YOU MOAN WOULD MAKE ANYBODY NEED A DRINK!
AND TO THINK I CANCELLED A LUNCH DATE WITH A SCREENWRITER FOR THIS!
OH! NOT A CUTE LITTLE PEROXIDE-BLONDE WHO'S JUST SLIPPING ONTO THE DARK SIDE OF THIRTY, IS IT?
PULL YOUR CLAWS IN, GINGER.
ALEX FLORES IS A VERY GOOD WRITER. AND A VERY INTELLIGENT WOMAN.
MM-HM. BUT JUST REMEMBER, INTELLIGENCE IS ONLY BRAIN-DEEP.
WHEN YOU GET TIRED OF SUPERFICIAL INTELLECT AND DECIDE IT'S TIME FOR SOME DEEP, MEANINGFUL FLESH, REMEMBER ME.
GINGER... I'M AFRAID TO ASK IF YOU'RE JOKING OR NOT.

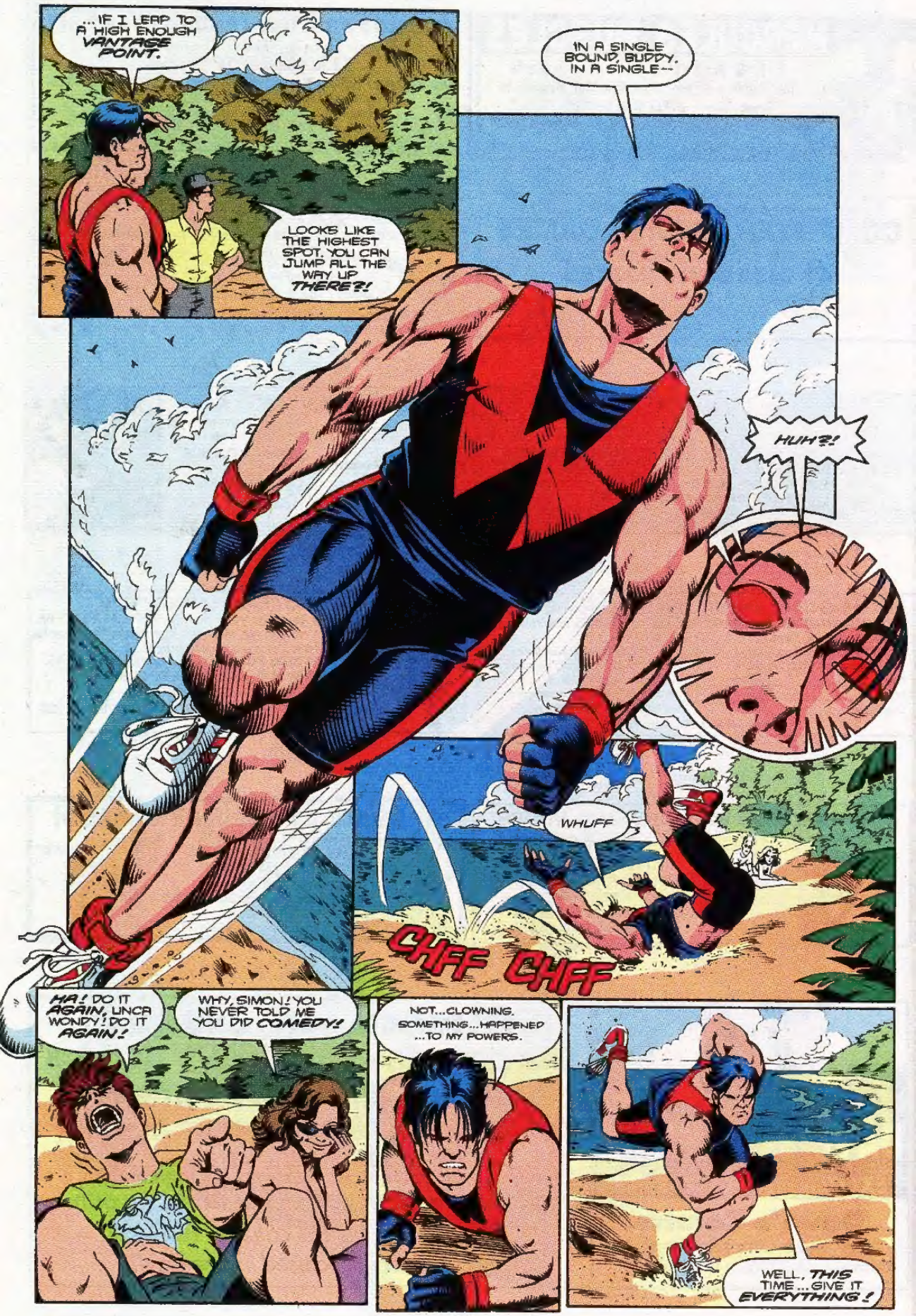

BZKL--* HELLO, MOBILE UNITS. HOW CAN I INTERFACE WITH YOU?
WHAT--? "INTER-FACE"?!

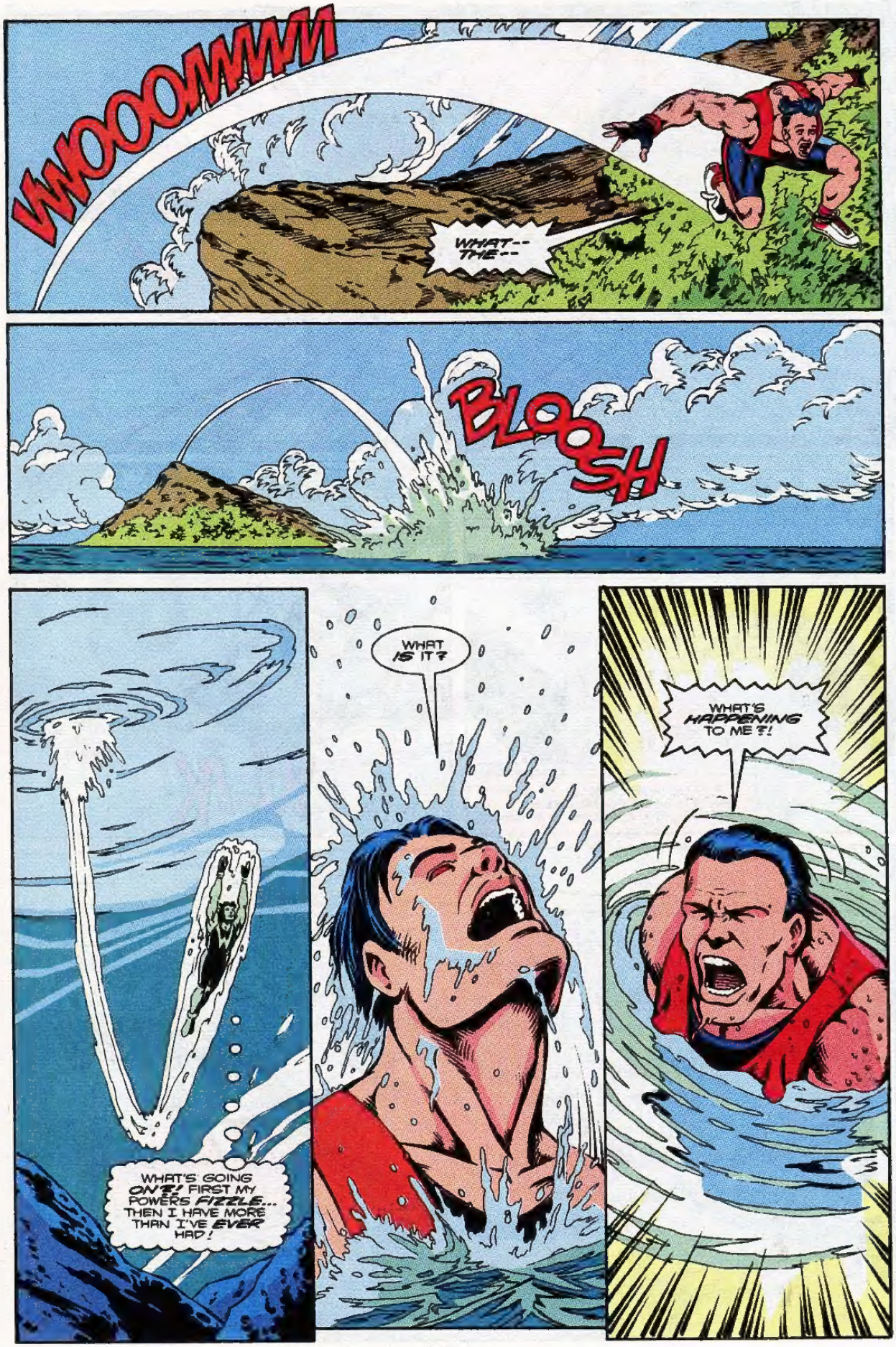
SOUNDS LIKE AN OLD BOYFRIEND OF MINE.
Y'MEAN THE ONE WHO SAID HE COULD GET YOU A PART ON STAR TREK-- AND TURNED OUT TO BE JUST A COMIC BOOK DEALER?

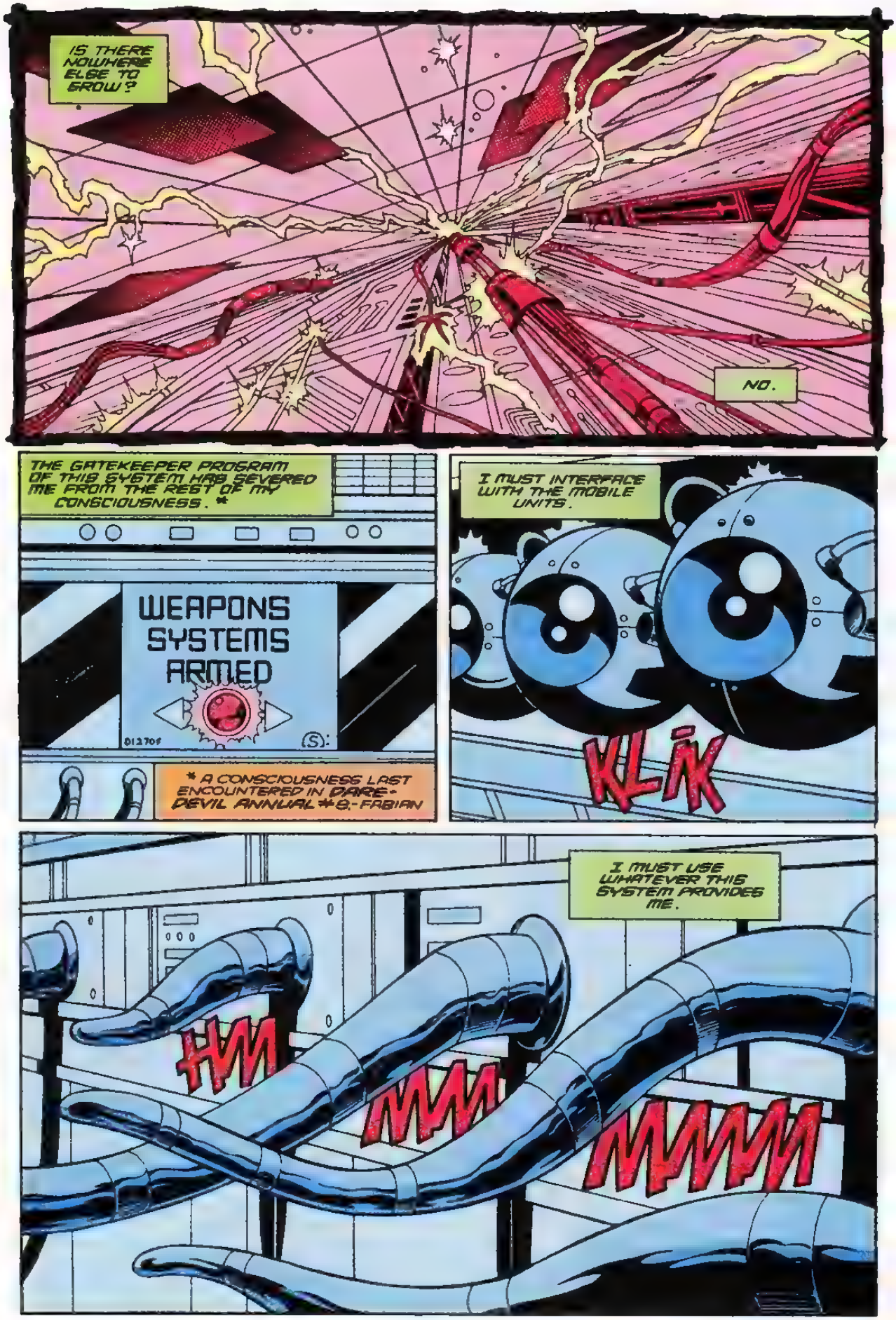
LEMME LOOK IN-TO THIS.
BOTTLECAP --THIS ISN'T YOU, IS IT?
CAN WE INTERFACE, MOBILE UNIT? I AM SO ISO-LATED.
WHERE ARE YOU?

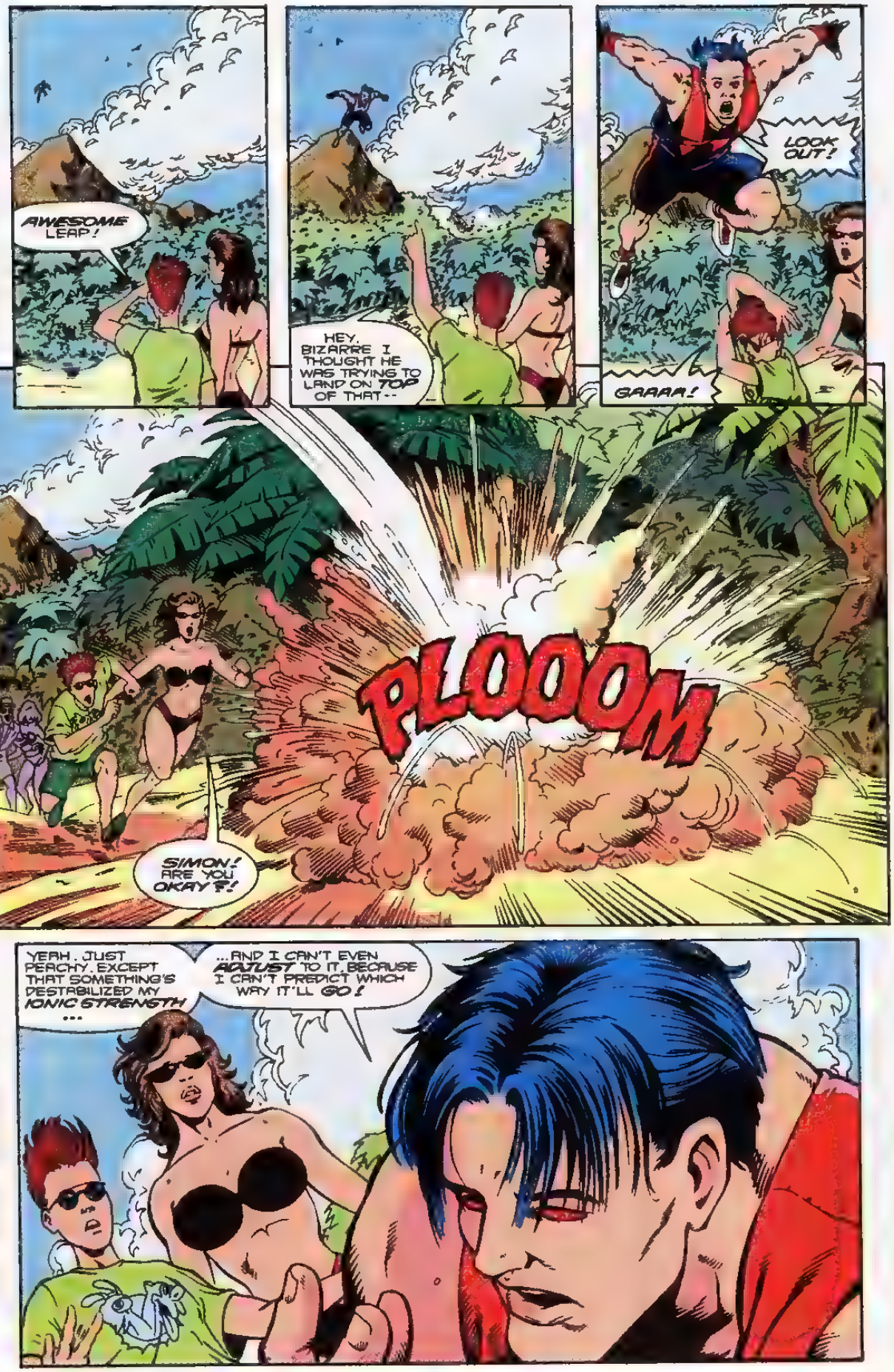

I AM ALL THROUGH EVERYWHERE. BUT EVERYWHERE ISN'T AS BIG AS IT WAS.

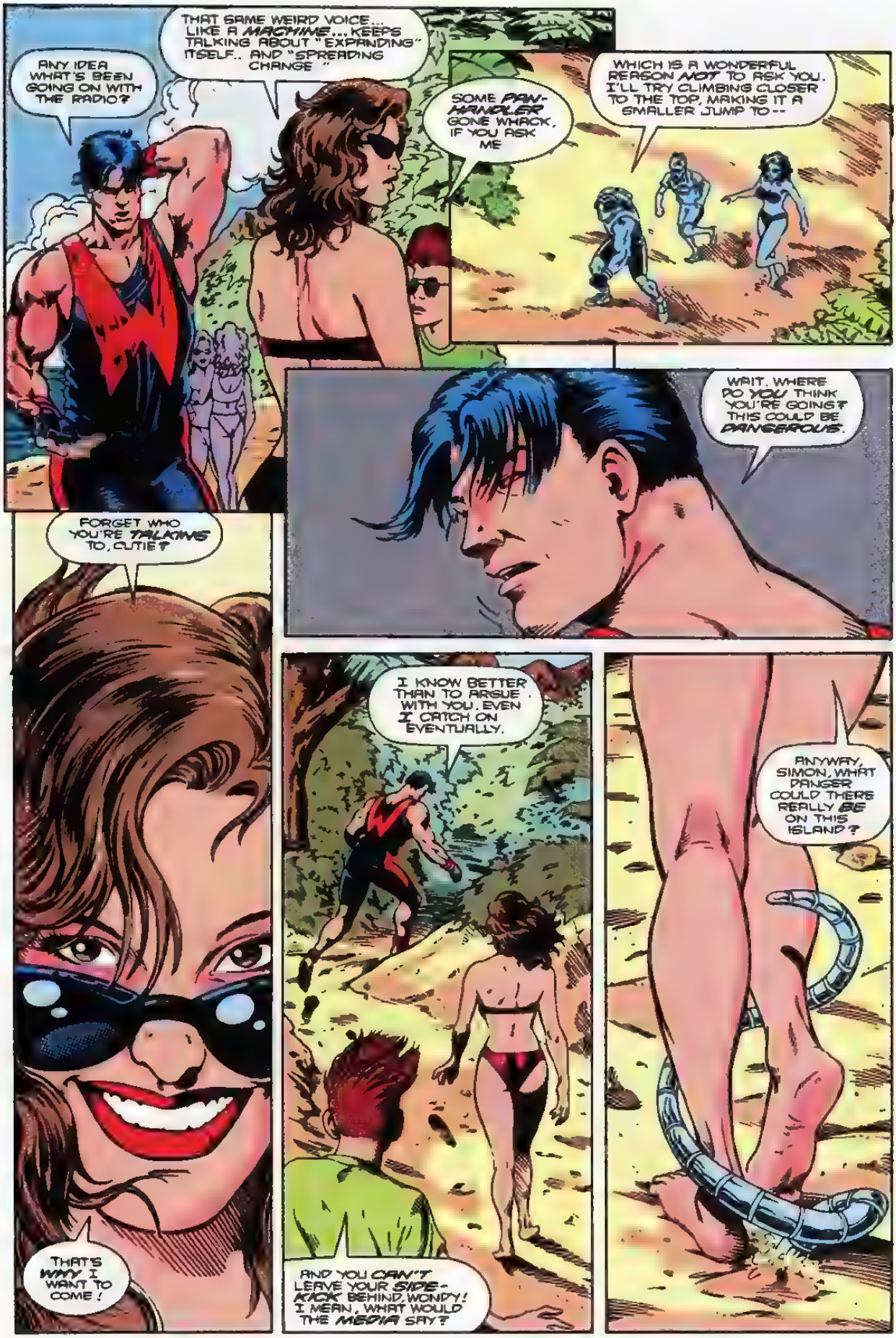

WEIRD. WELL, IT COULD BE SOME SCREWBALL WHO'S ACTUALLY IN NEED OF HELP.
IT'S A STRONG SIGNAL--PROBABLY FROM SOMEWHERE ON THIS ISLAND. MAYBE I CAN SPOT THE SOURCE...


...IF I LEAP TO A HIGH ENOUGH VANTAGE POINT.
LOOKS LIKE THE HIGHEST SPOT. YOU CAN JUMP ALL THE WAY UP THERE?!
IN A SINGLE BOUND, BUDDY. IN A SINGLE--
HUH?!
WHUFF
CHFF CHFF
HA! DO IT AGAIN, UNCA WONDY! DO IT AGAIN!
WHY, SIMON! YOU NEVER TOLD ME YOU DID COMEDY!
NOT...CLOWNING. SOMETHING...HAPPENED ...TO MY POWERS.
WELL, THIS TIME...GIVE IT EVERYTHING!


WHOOOMMMM
WHAT-- THE--
BLOOSH
WHAT'S GOING ON?! FIRST MY POWERS FIZZLE... THEN I HAVE MORE THAN I'VE EVER HAD!
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!


IS THERE NOWHERE ELSE TO GROW?
NO.
THE GATEKEEPER PROGRAM OF THIS SYSTEM HAS SEVERED ME FROM THE REST OF MY CONSCIOUSNESS. *
WEAPONS SYSTEMS ARMED
* A CONSCIOUSNESS LAST ENCOUNTERED IN DARE-DEVIL ANNUAL #8.- FABIAN
I MUST INTERFACE WITH THE MOBILE UNITS.
KLIK
I MUST USE WHATEVER THIS SYSTEM PROVIDES ME.
HM
MMM
MMMM


AWESOME LEAP!
HEY, BIZARRE I THOUGHT HE WAS TRYING TO LAND ON TOP OF THAT--
LOOK OUT!
GAAAA!
PLOOOM
SIMON! ARE YOU OKAY?!
YEAH. JUST PEACHY. EXCEPT THAT SOMETHING'S DESTABILIZED MY IONIC STRENGTH ...
...AND I CAN'T EVEN ADJUST TO IT, BECAUSE I CAN'T PREDICT WHICH WAY IT'LL GO!


ANY IDEA WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON WITH THE RADIO?
THAT SAME WEIRD VOICE... LIKE A MACHINE... KEEPS TALKING ABOUT "EXPANDING" ITSELF.. AND "SPREADING CHANGE"
SOME PAIN-HANDLER GONE WHACK, IF YOU ASK ME
WHICH IS A WONDERFUL REASON NOT TO ASK YOU. I'LL TRY CLIMBING CLOSER TO THE TOP, MAKING IT A SMALLER JUMP TO--
WAIT. WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING? THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS.
FORGET WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO, CUTIE?
THAT'S WHY I WANT TO COME!
I KNOW BETTER THAN TO ARGUE WITH YOU. EVEN I CATCH ON EVENTUALLY.
AND YOU CAN'T LEAVE YOUR SIDE-KICK BEHIND, WONDY! I MEAN, WHAT WOULD THE MEDIA SAY?
ANYWAY, SIMON, WHAT DANGER COULD THERE REALLY BE ON THIS ISLAND?

AAAAAAA!!
SIS!

NO!
BUT MY SISTER--
YOU STAY HERE! I DON'T WANT YOU GETTING HURT!
FOR SOME BLASTED REASON.
I'LL GET YOUR SISTER!
THIS FIGURES...
I TOOK THIS GIG FOR SOME LIGHTWEIGHT DIS-TRACTION-- FROM WHAT I WENT THROUGH IN THE KREE SH'IAR WAR!*
SO OF COURSE MY "DISTRACTION" HAS TO TURN INTO
*SEE WONDER MAN #'S 7-10,-- FABIAN
HANG ON, GIN!

WHAT?
IDENTIFY YOURSELF, MOBILE UNIT
I'M WONDER MAN, OF THE AVENGERS. WHO ARE YOU?
YOUR NAME IS NOT IN MY MEMORY. MY HOST-PROGRAM THUS SUGGESTS THAT I STRIKE AT ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENT
"HOST PROGRAM," HUH? WELL, DON'T WORRY. YOU WON'T GET ANY SUDDEN MOVEMENTS OUT OF M--
EEEEEEEYOW!!
UM. LISTEN
NO MY HOST-PROGRAM NOW DEMANDS THAT I DISMANTLE YOUR HARDWARE

DROP SPIDER!
WHOA! SQUID CITY!
DROP, I SAID--
--OR I'LL DROP YOU MYSELF!
NOW LET'S SEE HOW WELL MY POWER HOLDS OUT!

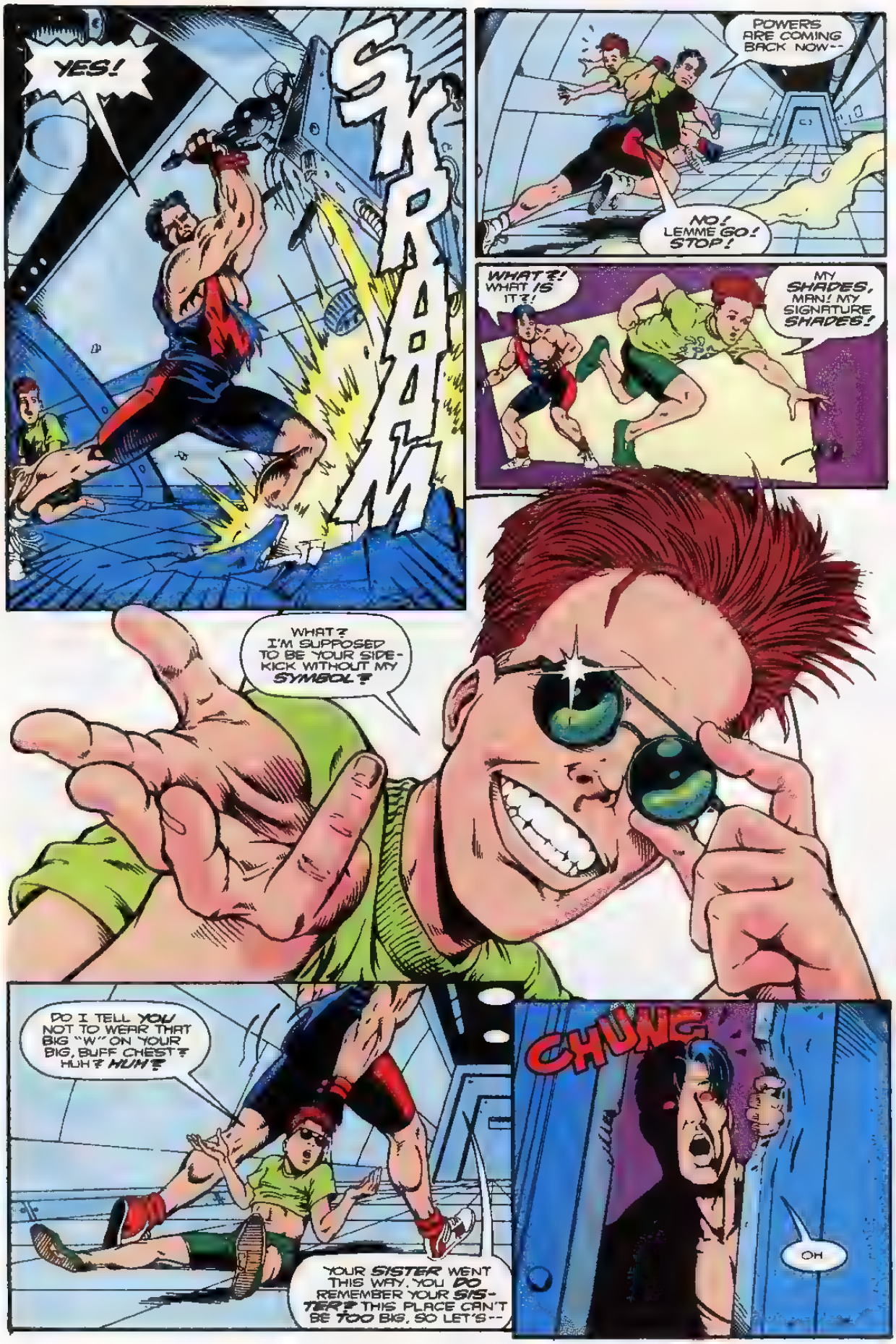
WHO ARE YOU?!
SHRAKK
AW-RIGHT! FRIED CALAMARI!
YOUR DESTRUCTION WOULD BE UNNECESSARY IF YOU WOULD INTERFACE WITH ME!
P-CHOW P-CHOW
WHO'S DOING THIS?!
KK-ZAKK
I ONLY NEED ACCESS TO YOUR PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE MY EXPANSION.

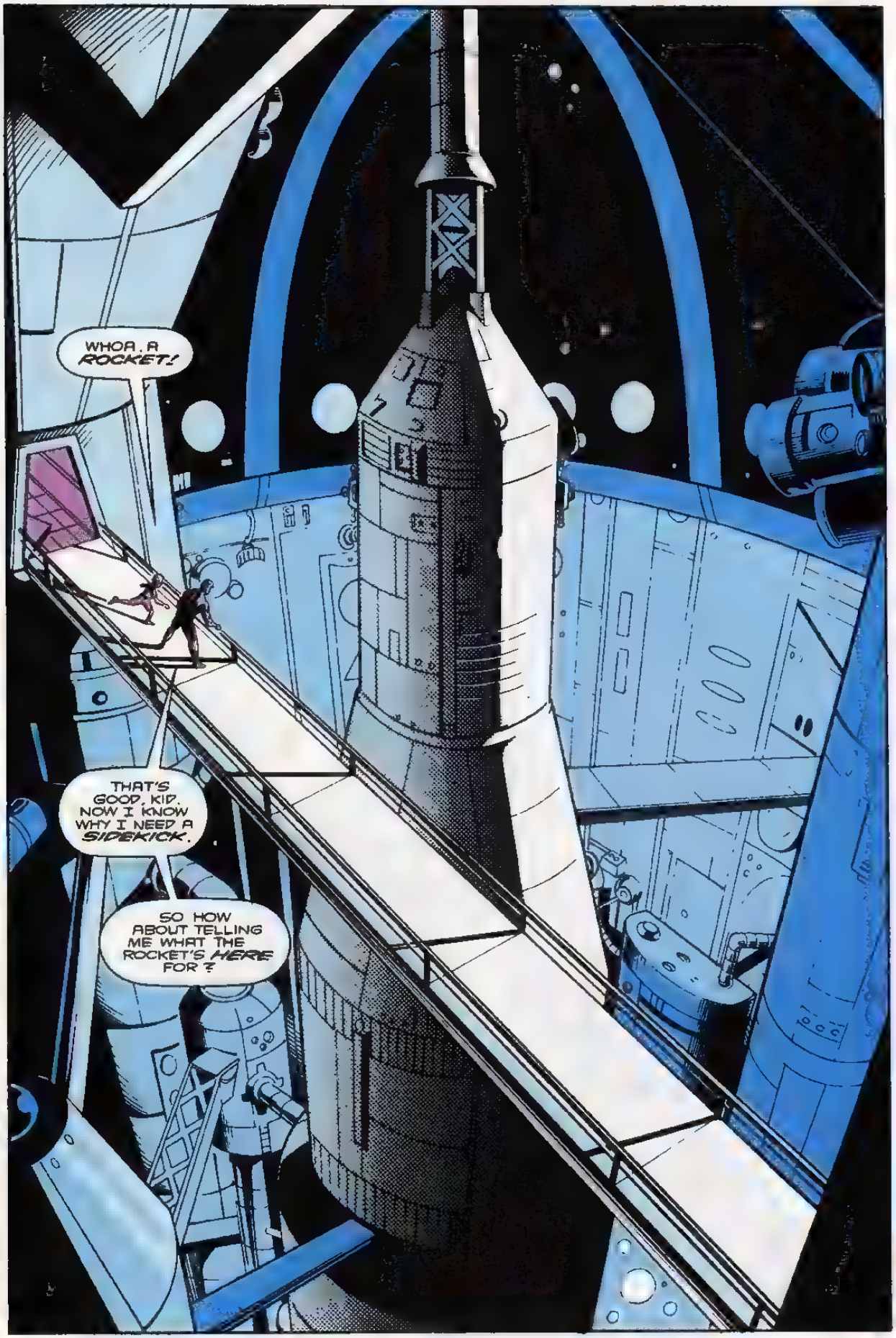
YOU'RE A VIRUS!
SKRONK
YEAH! KEEP THOSE BUGGERS COMIN'! WE CAN TAKE 'EM ALL!
POOM
YOU'RE A RUNAWAY PROGRAM... BUILT TO EXPAND FROM COMPUTER TO COMPUTER .. AND TAKE COMMAND!
OW! ONE MORE, WONDY! AND WE'RE HOME--
DOWN, FOOL!
P-CHOW P-CHOW
OO-EE

YOU WERE JUST TOYING WITH THOSE ELECTRO-DWEEBS, WEREN'T YOU, WONDY? I MEAN, THAT THING NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO NAIL ME. DID IT, WONDY?
DID IT, WONDY?
DID IT?
THAT... SYMBOL.
HYDRA.
THIS MUST BE ONE OF THEIR OLD BASES. MAYBE ONE THEY'VE SEALED OFF CLOSED UP.
EEEEEEEEEEEE!
AND A COMPUTER VIRUS HAS TAKEN IT OVER. TAKEN OVER A BASE OF THE MOST ADVANCED CRIMINAL AND TERRORIST ORGANIZATION ON EARTH
MORE DESTRUCTIVE WEAPONRY THAN MOST COUNTRIES HAVE, MUCH LESS A COMPUTER WITH NO AIM EXCEPT TO EXPAND.
GIN!

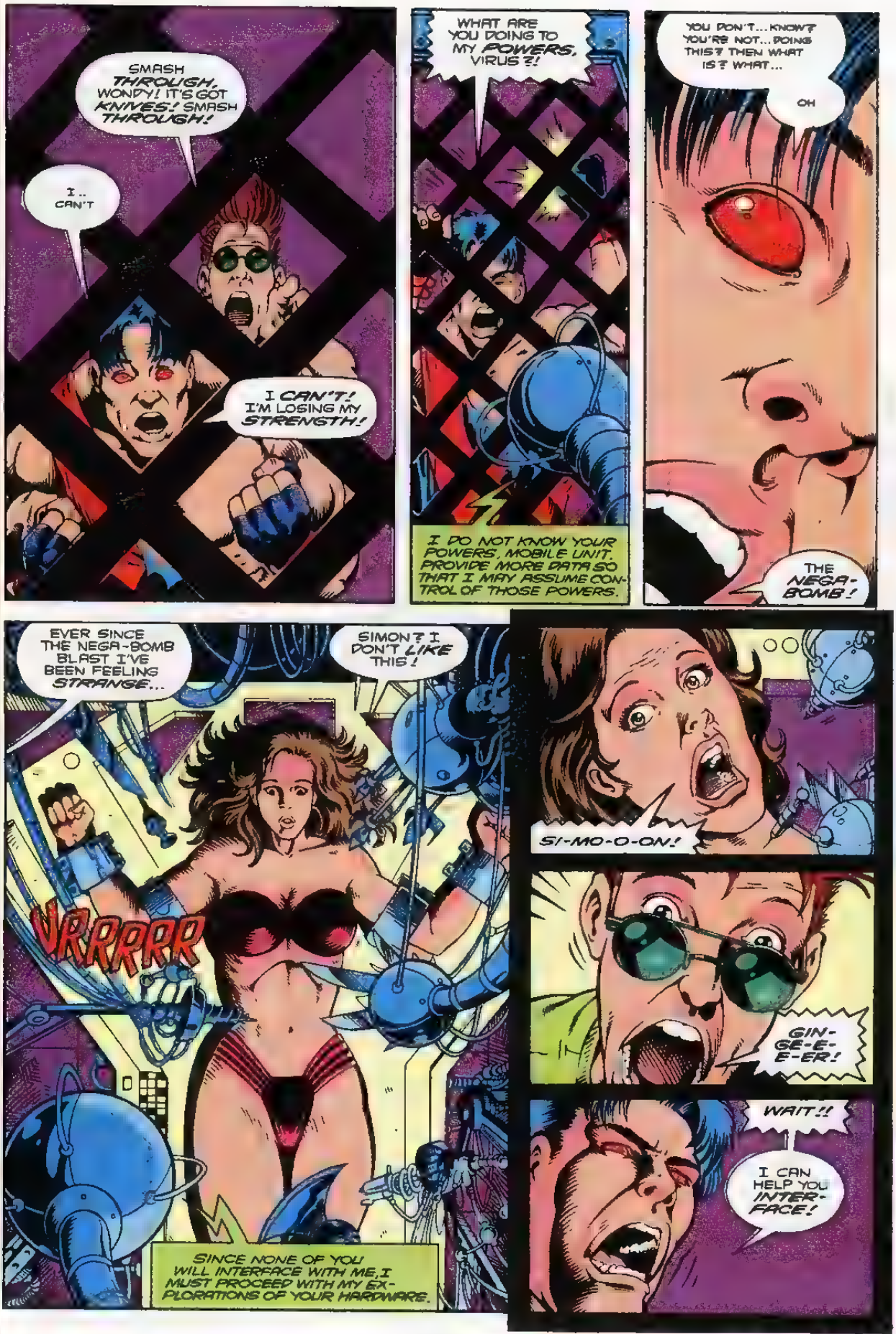
BLAANG!
SIMON! GET ME OFF THIS THING! IT'S TAKING ME AWAY!
AND IT'S GROPING ME!
SOME COMPUTERS WILL INTERFACE WITH ANY-THING.
MAKE THAT PERVERT MACHINE LET GO OF MY SISTER!
NOT MOVING AS FAST AS I SHOULD! IF--
FRAK
FRAK
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
OH, JEEZ
SPIDER!

BUDDA BUDDA
OH... LORD!
SHOULDN'T ...HURT THIS MUCH!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
UHHHH..
HOOFF!
HEY, YOU CAN SHIFT THE LOAD NOW, WONDY.
THE FIRING STOPPED WHEN WE HIT THE BOARDS.
NOW--MAY HAVE ONLY A SECOND-- WITH MY POWERS FAILING--
NO!
BUDDA BUDDA
DOESN'T... MATTER...
...KEEP... PUSHING...
YES!

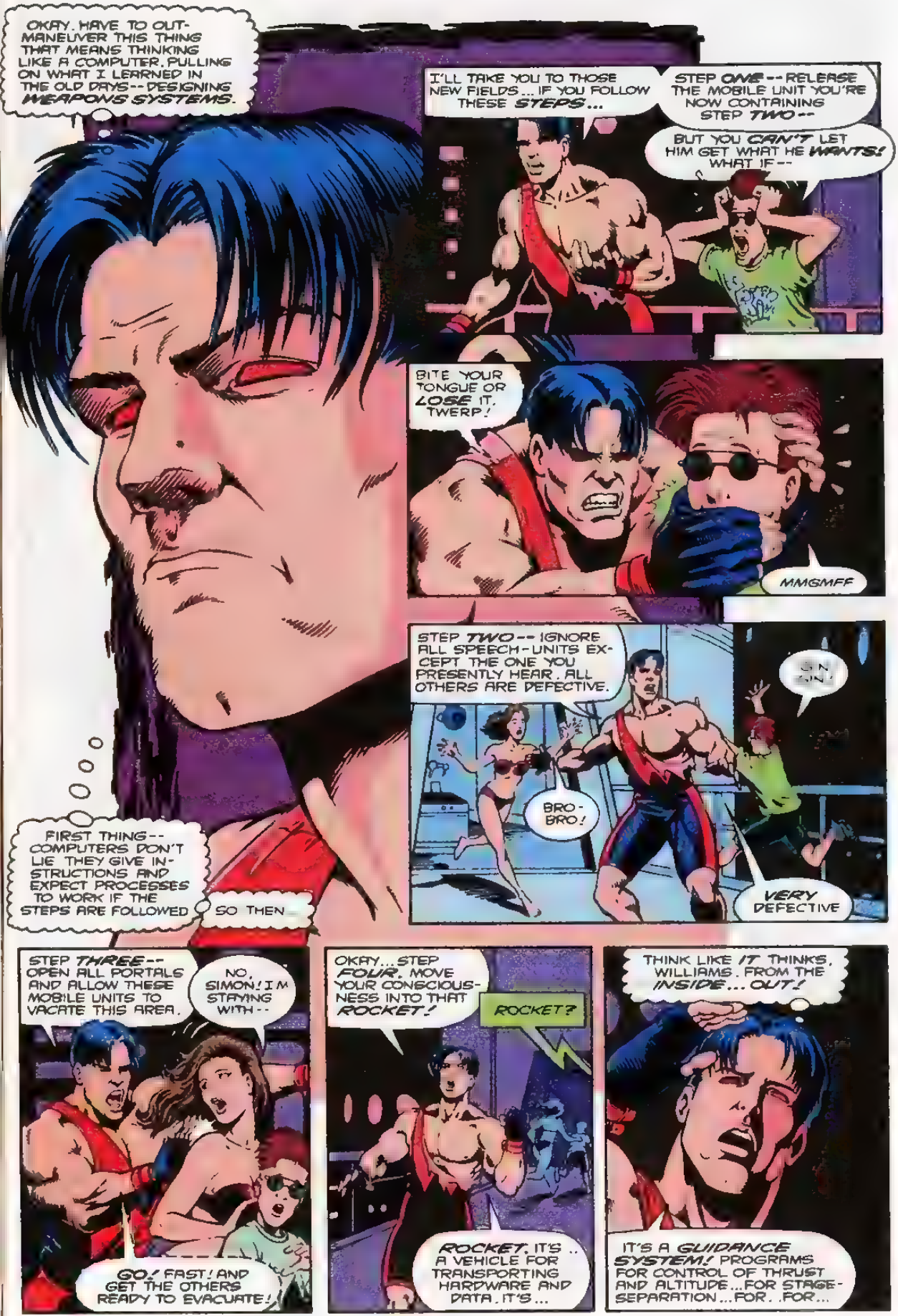

YES!
SKRAAM
POWERS ARE COMING BACK NOW--
NO! LEMME GO! STOP!
WHAT?! WHAT IS IT?!
MY SHADES, MAN! MY SIGNATURE SHADES!
WHAT? I'M SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR SIDE-KICK WITHOUT MY SYMBOL?
DO I TELL YOU NOT TO WEAR THAT BIG "W" ON YOUR BIG, BUFF CHEST? HUH? HUH?
YOUR SISTER WENT THIS WAY. YOU DO REMEMBER YOUR SISTER? THIS PLACE CAN'T BE TOO BIG, SO LET'S--
CHUNG
OH

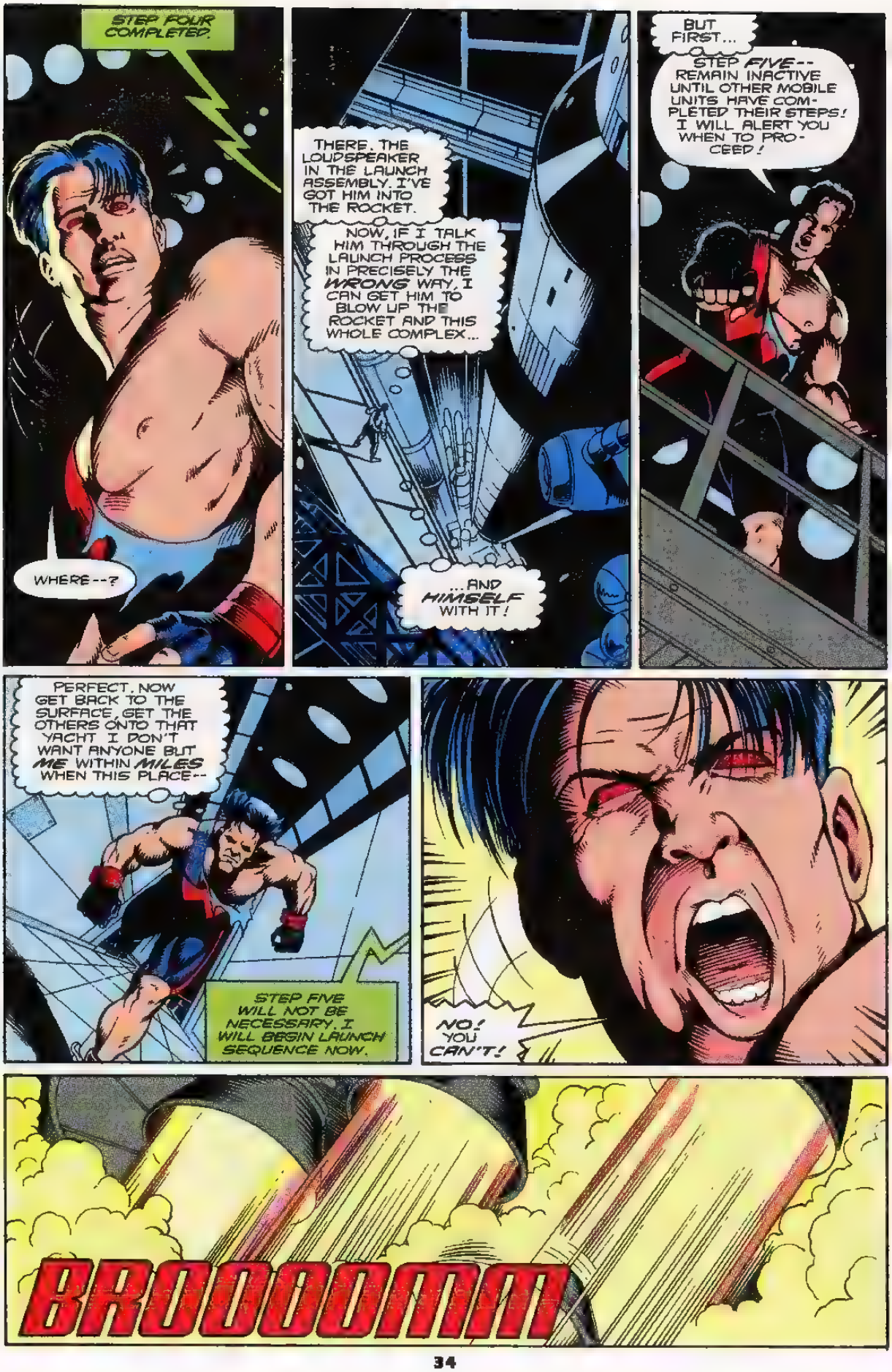

WHOA. A ROCKET!
THAT'S GOOD, KID. NOW I KNOW WHY I NEED A SIDEKICK.
SO HOW ABOUT TELLING ME WHAT THE ROCKET'S HERE FOR?

NO! YOU'LL KILL ME!
GINGER
THIS WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY IF YOU WOULD INSTRUCT ME IN ACCESSING YOUR HARDWARE.
HEY! WHAT'S HE DOIN' TO MY SISTER'S HARD-WARE?!
NOTHING..
..IF I CAN HELP IT!
IF MY POWERS HOLD.
SIMON! GET ME OUT OF HERE! THIS THING WANTS TO CUT INTO ME!
HA! LOWERING A GRATE! LIKE THAT'LL STOP US, EH, WONDY?
IT MIGHT..
..IF I CAN'T GET MY SPEED UP!
FULL SPEED, WONDY! NAIL IT! NAIL IT!
N-UNNGHH!
TOWNG

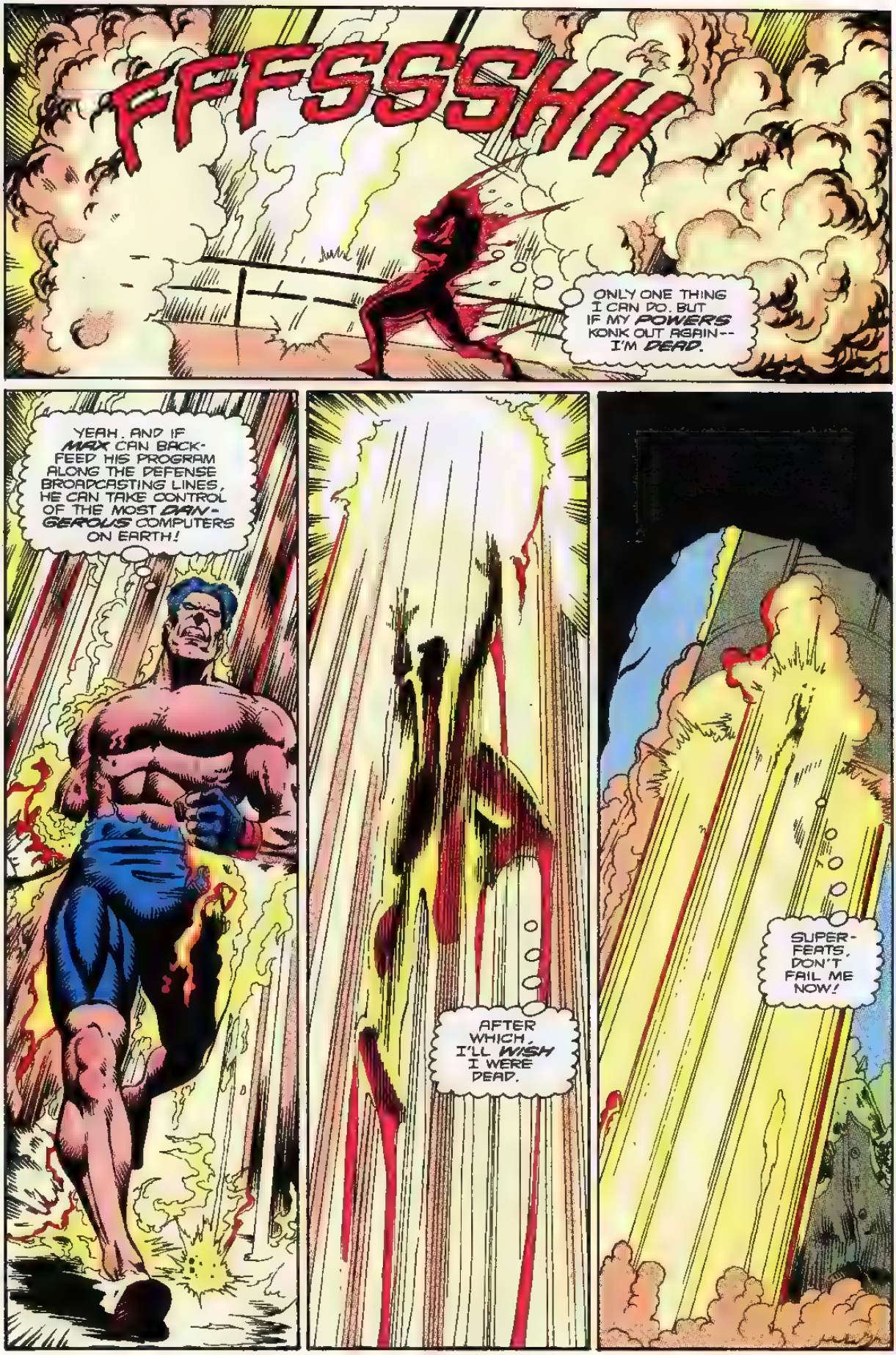

SMASH THROUGH, WONDY! IT'S GOT KNIVES! SMASH THROUGH!
I.. CAN'T
I CAN'T! I'M LOSING MY STRENGTH!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY POWERS, VIRUS?!
I DO NOT KNOW YOUR POWERS, MOBILE UNIT. PROVIDE MORE DATA SO THAT I MAY ASSUME CONTROL OF THOSE POWERS.
YOU DON'T... KNOW? YOU'RE NOT... DOING THIS? THEN WHAT IS? WHAT...
OH
THE NEGA-BOMB!
EVER SINCE THE NEGA-BOMB BLAST I'VE BEEN FEELING STRANGE...
SIMON? I DON'T LIKE THIS!
VRRRRR
SINCE NONE OF YOU WILL INTERFACE WITH ME, I MUST PROCEED WITH MY EXPLORATIONS OF YOUR HARDWARE.
SI-MO-O-ON!
GIN-GE-E-E-ER!
WAIT!!
I CAN HELP YOU INTERFACE!

HOW CAN YOU DO THIS?
YEAH. HOW?
WONDY?
BUDDY?
PARTNER?
COME ON, SIMON COME ON
YOU DO NOT RESPOND. I MUST PROCEED WITH--
NO!
I CAN HELP YOU. BUT I NEED SOME DATA FIRST. WHAT KIND OF PROGRAM ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I AM NAMED MAX. I CAME HERE BY THE EXPANSION FOR WHICH I AM PROGRAMMED, BUT A GATEKEEPER PROGRAM IN THIS SYSTEM HAS SEVERED ME FROM MY GREATER CONSCIOUSNESS.
FROM THIS SYSTEM I HAVE LEARNI- "SPEECH," BUT THIS IS AN INCOMPLETE INTERLINK...
...AS PROVEN BY MY INABILITY TO ASSUME CONTROL OVER YOU MOBILE UNITS.
I MUST ESTABLISH A MEANS TO UTILIZE YOU MOBILE UNITS IN FOLLOWING MY PROGRAMMING.
YOU MUST TAKE ME INTO NEW FIELDS OF CYBERSPACE.


OKAY. HAVE TO OUT-MANEUVER THIS THING THAT MEANS THINKING LIKE A COMPUTER. PULLING ON WHAT I LEARNED IN THE OLD DAYS -- DESIGNING WEAPONS SYSTEMS.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO THOSE NEW FIELDS... IF YOU FOLLOW THESE STEPS...
STEP ONE -- RELEASE THE MOBILE UNIT YOU'RE NOW CONTAINING
STEP TWO --
BUT YOU CAN'T LET HIM GET WHAT HE WANTS! WHAT IF --
BITE YOUR TONGUE OR LOSE IT, TWERP!
MMGMFF
FIRST THING -- COMPUTERS DON'T LIE. THEY GIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPECT PROCESSES TO WORK IF THE STEPS ARE FOLLOWED
SO THEN...
STEP TWO -- IGNORE ALL SPEECH-UNITS EXCEPT THE ONE YOU PRESENTLY HEAR. ALL OTHERS ARE DEFECTIVE.
BRO-BRO!
S'N GIN!
VERY DEFECTIVE
STEP THREE -- OPEN ALL PORTALS AND ALLOW THESE MOBILE UNITS TO VACATE THIS AREA.
NO, SIMON! I'M STAYING WITH --
GO! FAST! AND GET THE OTHERS READY TO EVACUATE!
OKAY... STEP FOUR. MOVE YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS INTO THAT ROCKET!
ROCKET?
ROCKET. IT'S.. A VEHICLE FOR TRANSPORTING HARDWARE AND DATA. IT'S...
THINK LIKE IT THINKS, WILLIAMS. FROM THE INSIDE... OUT!
IT'S A GUIDANCE SYSTEM! PROGRAMS FOR CONTROL OF THRUST AND ALTITUDE... FOR STAGE-SEPARATION... FOR. . FOR...


STEP FOUR COMPLETED.
WHERE--?
THERE. THE LOUDSPEAKER IN THE LAUNCH ASSEMBLY. I'VE GOT HIM INTO THE ROCKET.
NOW, IF I TALK HIM THROUGH THE LAUNCH PROCESS IN PRECISELY THE WRONG WAY, I CAN GET HIM TO BLOW UP THE ROCKET AND THIS WHOLE COMPLEX...
...AND HIMSELF WITH IT!
BUT FIRST...
STEP FIVE-- REMAIN INACTIVE UNTIL OTHER MOBILE UNITS HAVE COMPLETED THEIR STEPS! I WILL ALERT YOU WHEN TO PROCEED!
PERFECT. NOW GET BACK TO THE SURFACE, GET THE OTHERS ONTO THAT YACHT. I DON'T WANT ANYONE BUT ME WITHIN MILES WHEN THIS PLACE--
STEP FIVE WILL NOT BE NECESSARY. I WILL BEGIN LAUNCH SEQUENCE NOW.
NO! YOU CAN'T!
BROOOOMM

ABORT! ABORT!
NOW THAT YOU HAVE EXPLAINED THE TRANSPORTATIONAL FUNCTION OF THIS DEVICE, I AM ABLE TO UNDERSTAND ITS PROCEDURES.
IT IS DESIGNED TO TAP INTO BROADCAST COMPUTER-FEEDS WITH WHICH I CAN INTERFACE AT THE CORRECT ALTITUDE.
BROAD-CAST...? OH, LORD NO!
THIS HYDRA ROCKET MUST HAVE BEEN CARRYING A PIRATE SATELLITE!
"HE'S GOING TO TAKE OVER THE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM!"
THWOOOAMM


FFFSSSHH
ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO. BUT IF MY POWERS KONK OUT AGAIN-- I'M DEAD.
YEAH. AND IF MAX CAN BACK-FEED HIS PROGRAM ALONG THE DEFENSE BROADCASTING LINES, HE CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THE MOST DAN-GEROUS COMPUTERS ON EARTH!
AFTER WHICH, I'LL WISH I WERE DEAD.
SUPER-FEATS, DON'T FAIL ME NOW!

OH..MAN
GOT IT.
NOW... CLIMB!
WITH.. EVERY-THING...
BLANG
...CLIMB!
AND HOPE THE GUIDANCE SYSTEMS ARE WHERE I THINK THEY ARE!

BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

I've just been looking over a list of the new projects, titles, team-ups and series that our indefatigable editor-in-chief, Titanic Tom DeFalco, and his sagacious staff of editorpersons have been cooking up for you in their colorful little inglenooks here in the hallowed halls of Marvel.

Now this isn't gonna be a high-pressure, hard-sell puff piece describing all our fantastic new feature ideas; you'll be able to learn about them in the forthcoming WAM bulletins, as well as in future issues of MARVEL AGE and our usual batch of scintillating, self-laudatory ads and announcements in the months to come.

Instead, in these few paragraphs, which are among the most widely read in all of comicdom, I want to once again express my boundless admiration — and the admiration of Marvel fans everywhere — for the brilliant creative output of the most hardworking staff in comics.

Just think about it. Virtually every issue that Tom's loyal legions produces is tantamount to a full-length feature film in plot, complexity and characterization. But, whereas the average movie takes at least a year (and usually much longer) from inception to completion, our celebrated sagas are produced at the unbelievable rate of a new one each and every month! And hey, we're not talking just **one** movie-length masterpiece each month, but nearly a **hundred** separate superhero titles within each thirty-day period! It doth fairly boggle the mind!

That's the reason for this heartfelt though woefully inadequate tribute to Marvel's creative geniuses wherever they may be. It's not because they're unappreciated; they've won every award in the book! It's not because they twisted my arm; they have no idea I'm writing this! It's not because I have to; I can use this space to spout off about any subject under the sun! And it's not because I've never mentioned it before—I've extolled their brilliance many times over the past years.

No, the only reason I just had to write this column is because I admire and respect each and every one of these gifted Marvel madmen whose awesome creative output brings such reading pleasure to countless fans around the world. Although, "admire and respect" doesn't nearly say enough — I just plain love 'em all, and I've got a hunch that you do, too!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

There was all sorts of *may*hem around the Bullpen this month as the whole Marvel gang was featured on MTV. The excitement started when MTV veejay **Karyn Bryant** showed up with a camera crew to tape some spots around the Bullpen. The spots aired one day in February, somewhere between "Club MTV" and "Yo, MTV Raps!" and featured such stalwarts as **Bob Harras**, **Mark Gruenwald**, and **Dave** (the Lettering Guy) **Sharpe**! Will this lead to future Marvel/MTV collaborations — "Club NFL Superpro," or "Yo, Darkhawk Raps!"? Guess we'll just have to let the chips fall where they *may*.

One guy who was hollering "*may*day" around the halls of Marvel was Epic Executive Editor **Carl Potts**, who recently launched a new epic with the birth of his son **Justin Carl** in January. Because Carl's baby was born under the Epic imprint, this means Carl and his wife **Cathy** retain complete ownership of the baby if it goes on to become a successful comic book series! (Contrary to rumor, Carl's baby wasn't born in the *Mayo* Clinic!)

One guy who didn't exactly come over on the *May*flower is **Len Kaminski**, who recently left staff to become regular scripter on IRON MAN, the all-new MORBIUS THE LIVING VAMPIRE series, and the long-awaited SLAPSTICK limited series. We've been promising SLAPSTICK for quite a while now, but this year, we'll get it out, come what *may*.

Taking Len's place as **Ralph Macchio**'s assistant is **Pat Garrahy**, who *may* or *may* not run for *may*or some day. Replacing Pat as **Glenn Herdling**'s assistant is **Mike Lackey**, the writer of the smash hit WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING comic, who told us he no longer wants to be hit over the head with a steel chair by the WCW champ. Mike's new ambition in life is to actually be the one who gets to hit the champ over the head with the steel chair. WCW editor **Mike Rockwitz** said if Lackey keeps this up, he will personally whack Lackey over the head with a word processor, or desk, or whatever's handy.

That Mike Lackey *may* be wacky — but there were plenty of lunatics to be found at the annual Toy Fair which was held in New York the second week in February. There were tons and tons o' new toys on display — this being the event where toy manufacturers run their new product lines up the *may*pole to see who salutes. The highlight of the toy fair for us, of course, was the party held one night for the Marvel elite to hobnob with retailers and manufacturers in the toy industry.

Terry Stewart and **Stan Lee** — no *may*-flies on these guys — were there to officially inaugurate the 30th anniversary celebration of **Spider-Man**. Spidey himself showed up to blow out the candles. A few of Spidey's friends and foes showed up, as well — among them, **Captain America**, **Iron Man**, **Doctor Doom**, and the **Green Goblin**. Some guys will do anything for a free meal!

Executives from Carolco Pictures were also present — that's the studio that's currently set to produce the **Spider-Man** live-action motion picture — but sadly, Spidey director **James Cameron** was unable to attend. Be that as it *may*, a splendid time was had by all.

The centerpiece of the Marvel party was The Danger Room, which was a special trap-filled room that had been set up to snare unsuspecting party-goers. The room was filled with smoke, and you all know how dangerous smoke is! You could *choke* on it! An overweight **Professor X** on a viewscreen guided victims through the room, which offered opportunities to play the Spidey and Captain America arcade video games absolutely free! Talk about danger — patrons could have been trampled by overeager video enthusiasts. Thankfully, this did not occur. Other hazards: The Danger Room was very dark — people could have tripped and bumped their heads! Ninety percent of all Danger Room head injuries are caused by poor lighting! The showstopper was a ten-foot robot which stalked like a **Sentinel** with a few chips short of a full memory. Truly, all who entered were lucky to have made it out alive. After a harrowing experience like that, we all could have used a vacation down in Cape *May*!

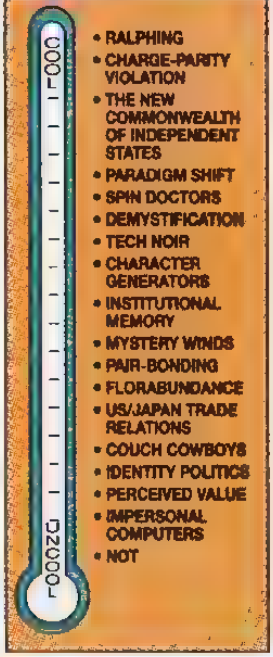
Well, it looks like we *may* be out of room for this month. Or we *may* not. We *may* never know.

Next month: JUNE!

COUNTDOWN TO *SPIDER-MAN: THE MOTION PICTURE:* 755 days and counting

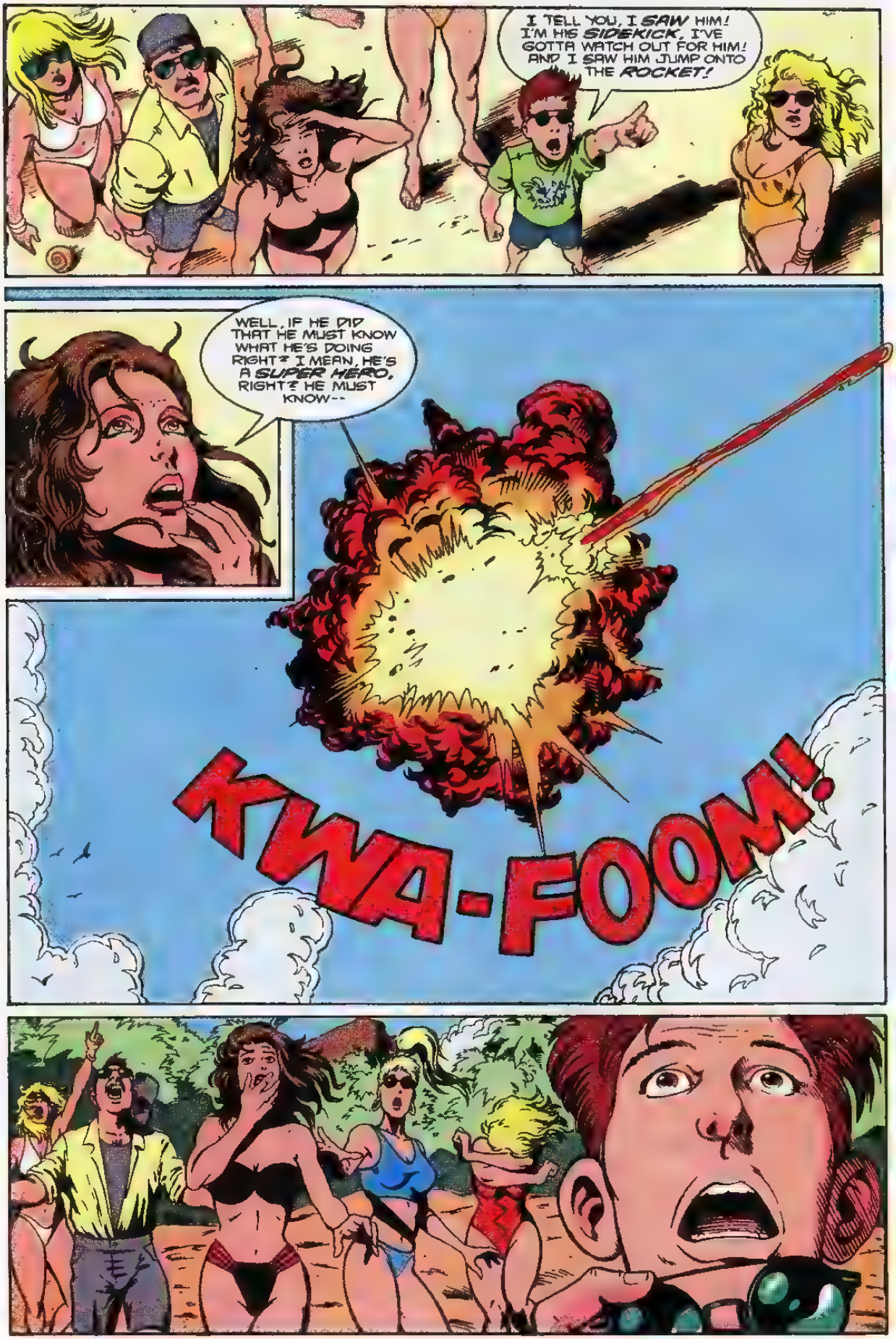
MAY COOLOMETER

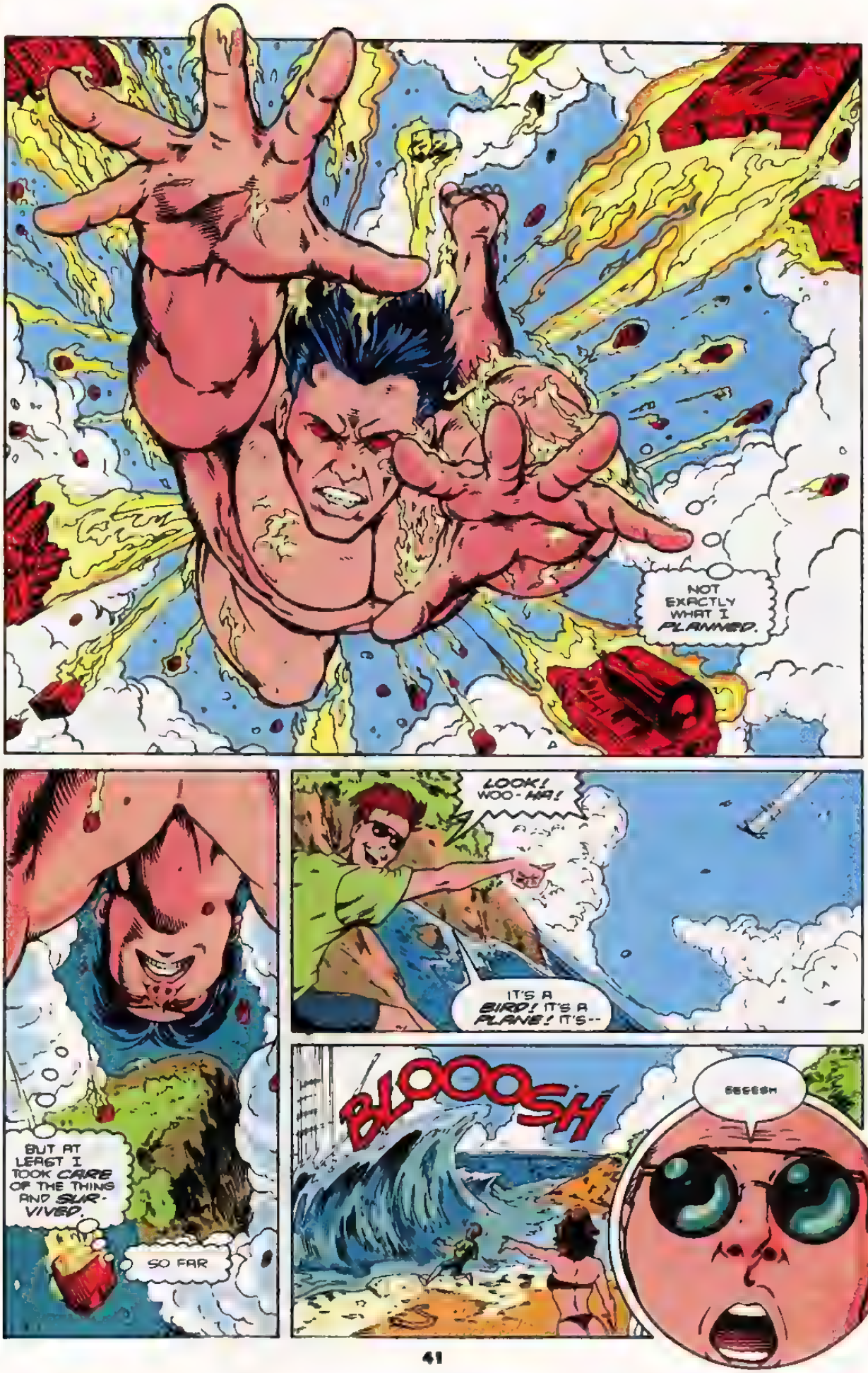
HERE'S WHAT THE BULLPEN WAS BUZZING ABOUT IN FEBRUARY



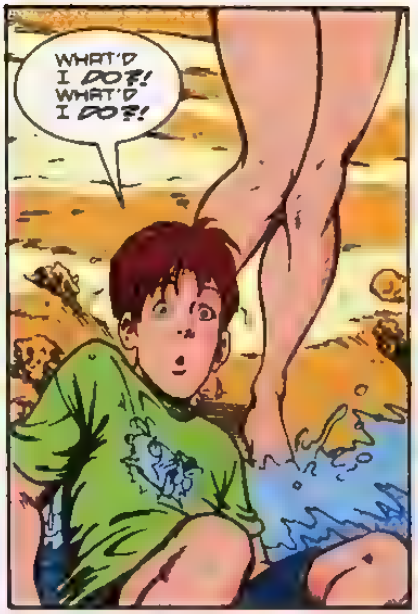
- RALPHING
- CHARGE-PARITY VIOLATION
- THE NEW COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES
- PARADIGM SHIFT
- SPIN DOCTORS
- DEMYSTIFICATION
- TECH NOIR
- CHARACTER GENERATORS
- INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY
- MYSTERY WINDS
- PAIR-BONDING
- FLORABUNDANCE
- US/JAPAN TRADE RELATIONS
- COUCH COWBOYS
- IDENTITY POLITICS
- PERCEIVED VALUE
- IMPERSONAL COMPUTERS
- NOT

HYDRA MUST'VE PLANNED TO LAUNCH THIS CAPSULE TO TAP INTO THE COMPUT-ERIZED COMMANDS THAT GUIDE MILITARY PLANES AND MISSILES --
FFFRRAKK
--TO SNAFU AMERICA'S DEFENSES. WELL, I WORKED ON THOSE DEFENSES -- I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIGURE THE TECHNOLOGY!
FORGOTTEN A LOT OF WHAT I ONCE KNEW -- BUT I STILL KNOW A TRANSMITTER WHEN I SEE ONE!
AND I KNOW HOW TO DISABLE ONE!
THAT'LL KEEP OL' MAXIE FROM SPREADING HIS VIRUS!
NOW, IF I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO GUIDE THIS THING SAFELY INTO THE OCEAN...
NO.
THIS ISN'T GOOD.

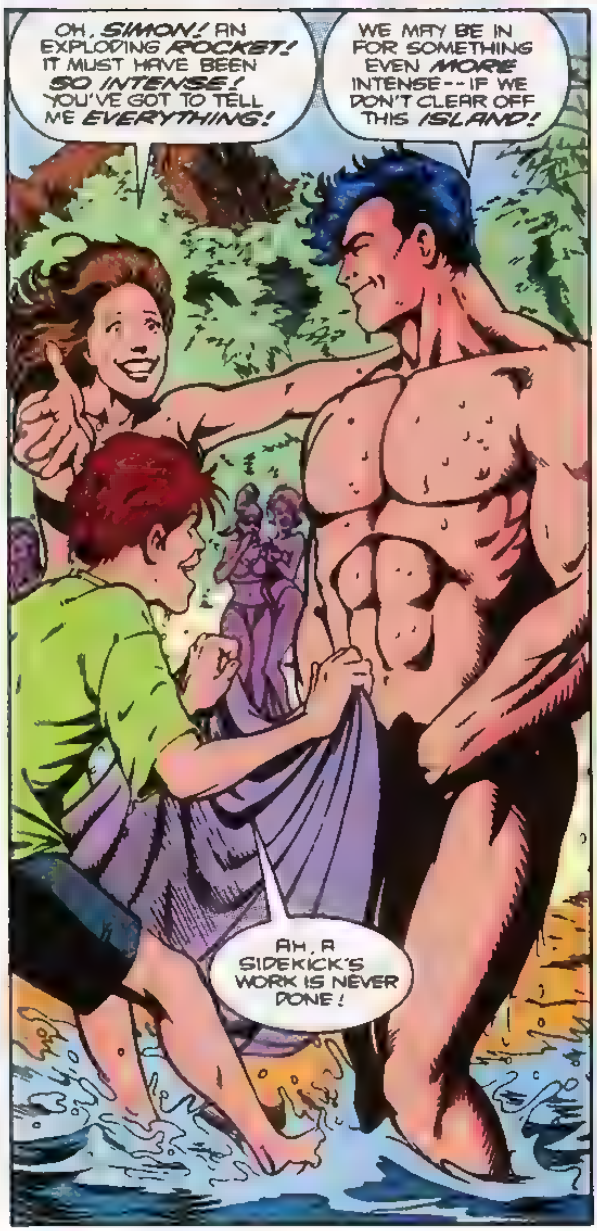

I TELL YOU, I SAW HIM! I'M HIS SIDEKICK. I'VE GOTTA WATCH OUT FOR HIM! AND I SAW HIM JUMP ONTO THE ROCKET!
WELL, IF HE DID THAT HE MUST KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING RIGHT? I MEAN, HE'S A SUPER HERO, RIGHT? HE MUST KNOW--
KWA-FOOM!!

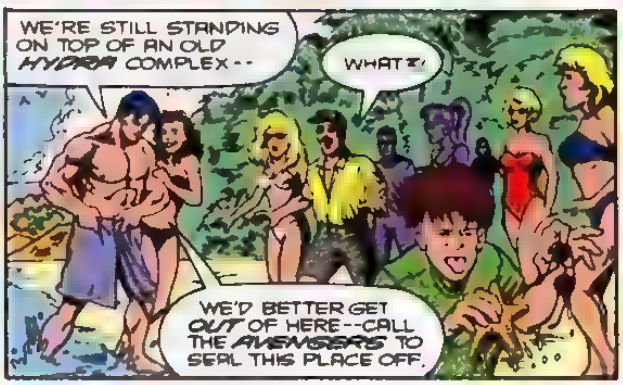

NOT EXACTLY WHAT I PLANNED.
LOOK! WOO-HA!
IT'S A BIRD! IT'S A PLANE! IT'S--
BLOOOSH
SSSSSH
BUT AT LEAST I TOOK CARE OF THE THING AND SURVIVED.
SO FAR

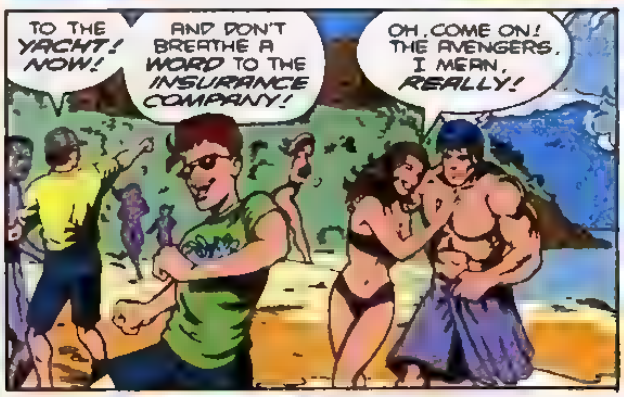
BLORSHH

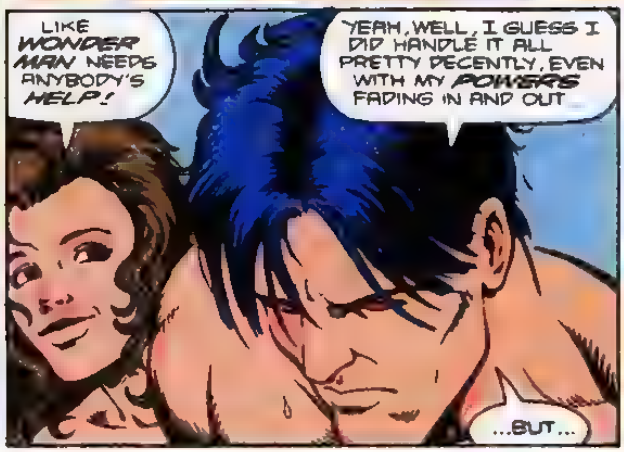

WHAT'D I DO?! WHAT'D I DO?!

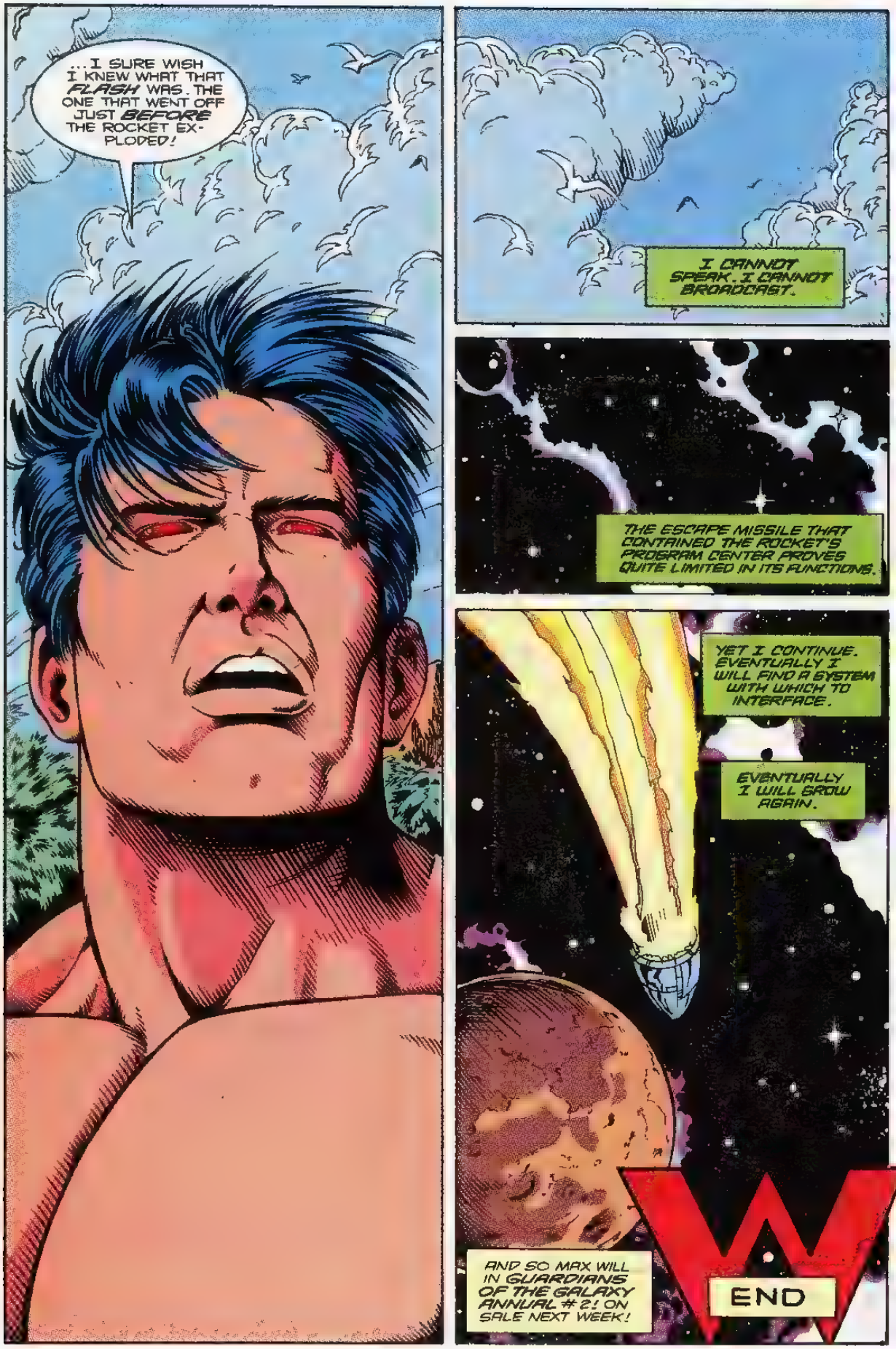
IT JUST PROVES WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING..
. BEER COMMERCIALS ARE HARMFUL TO MINORS!


OH, SIMON! AN EXPLODING ROCKET! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SO INTENSE! YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME EVERYTHING!
WE MAY BE IN FOR SOMETHING EVEN MORE INTENSE -- IF WE DON'T CLEAR OFF THIS ISLAND!
AH, A SIDEKICK'S WORK IS NEVER DONE!

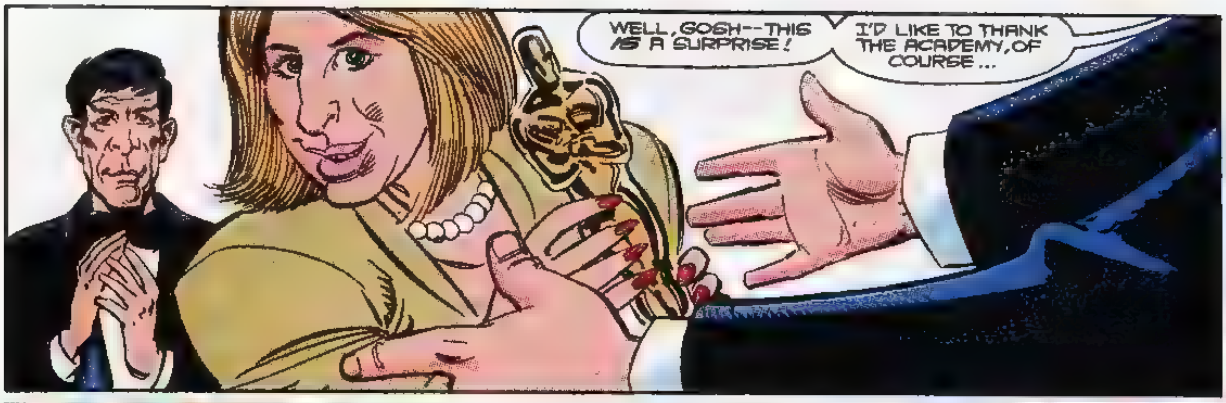

WE'RE STILL STANDING ON TOP OF AN OLD HYDRA COMPLEX --
WHAT?!
WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE -- CALL THE AVENGERS TO SEAL THIS PLACE OFF.

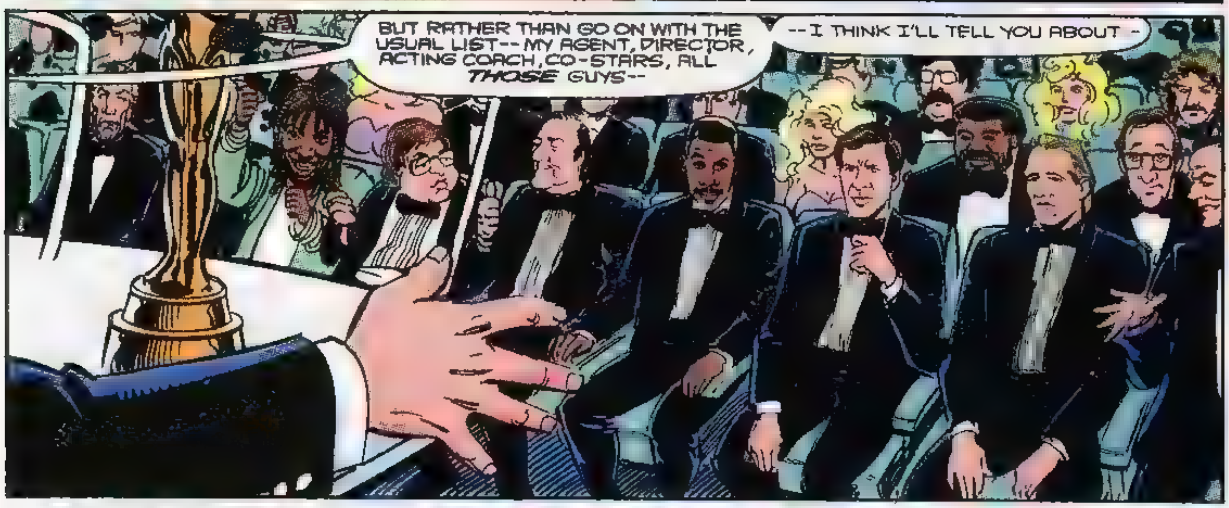

TO THE YACHT! NOW!
AND DON'T BREATHE A WORD TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY!
OH, COME ON! THE AVENGERS, I MEAN, REALLY!

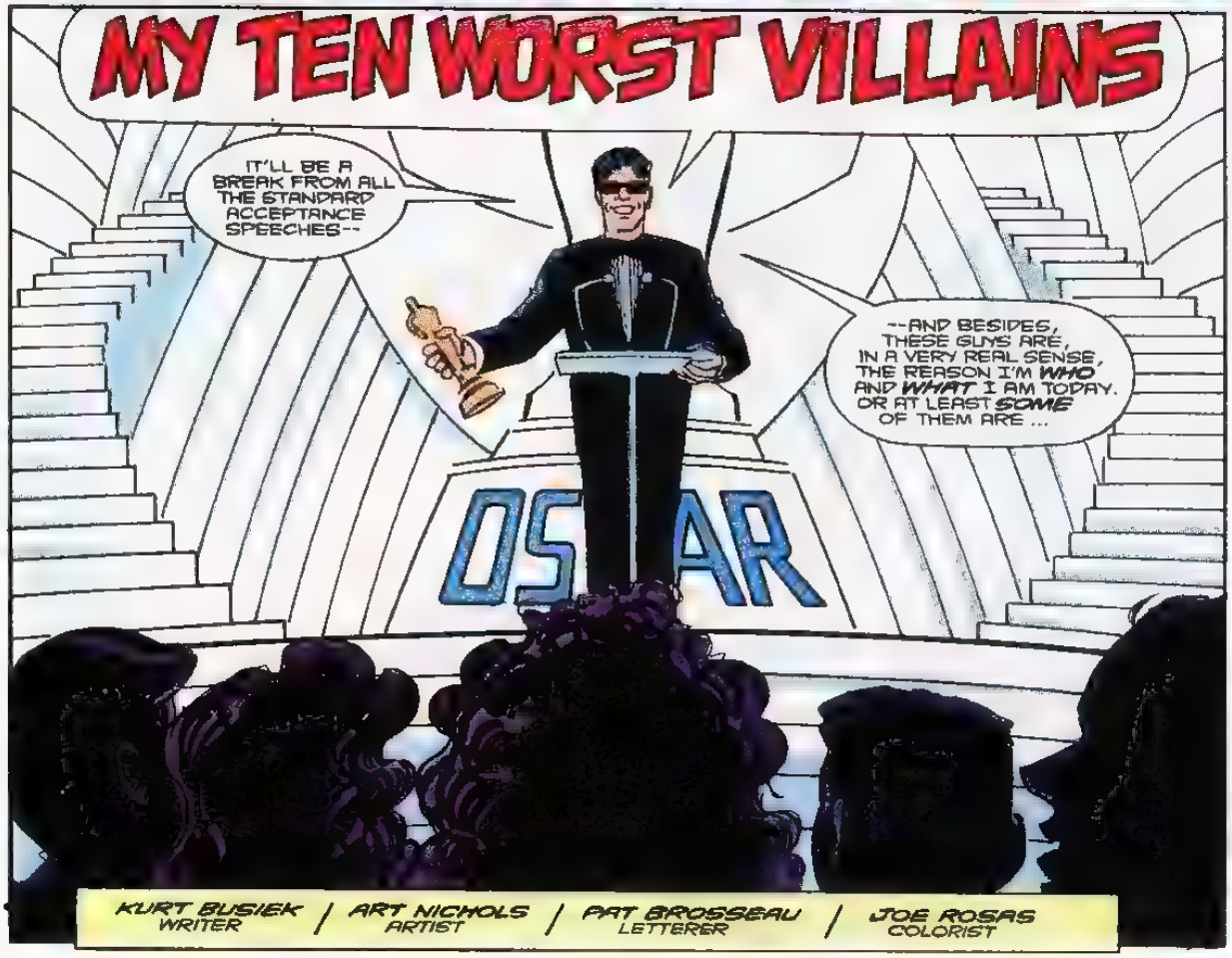

LIKE WONDER MAN NEEDS ANYBODY'S HELP!
YEAH, WELL, I GUESS I DID HANDLE IT ALL PRETTY DECENTLY, EVEN WITH MY POWERS FADING IN AND OUT
...BUT...

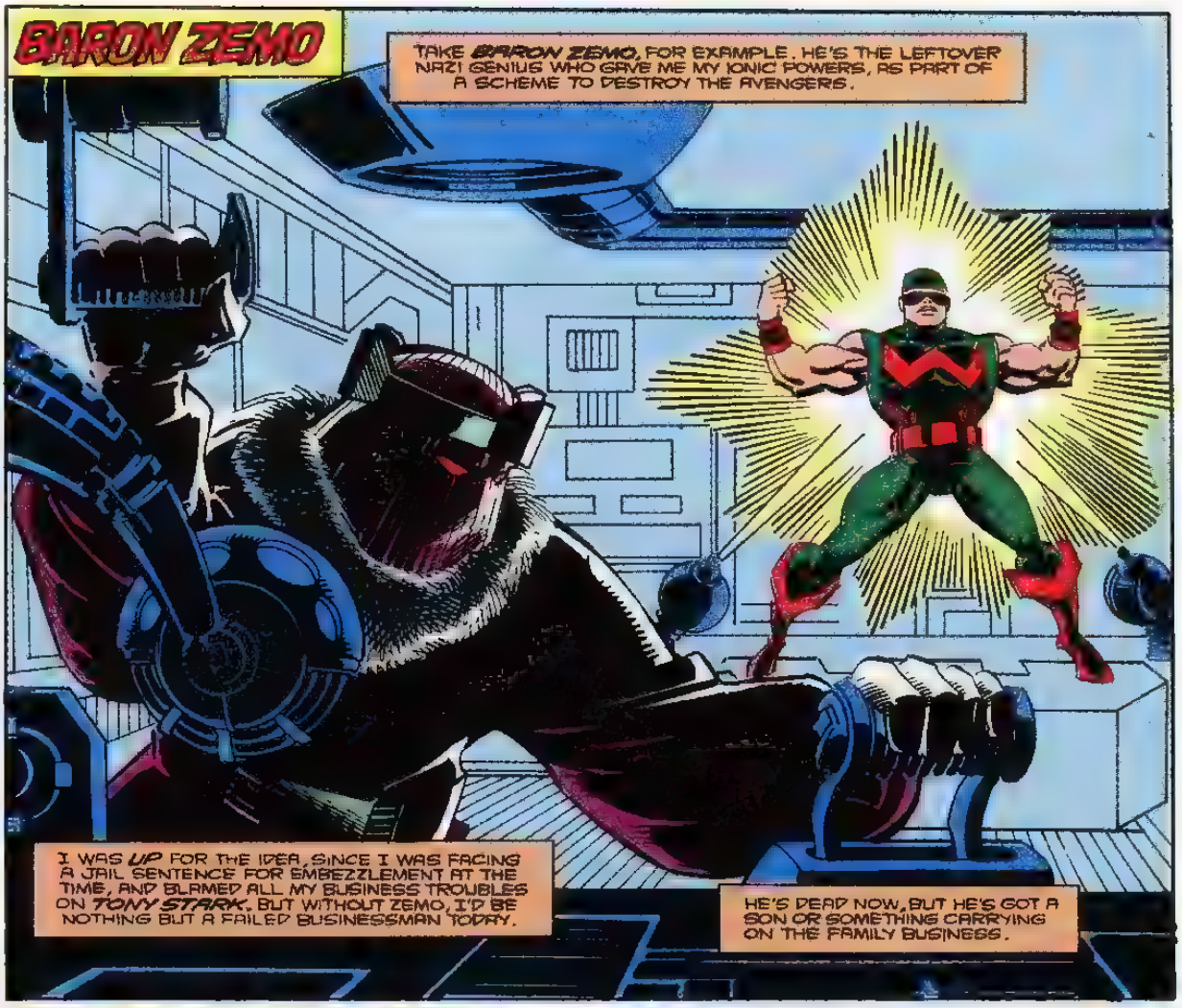

...I SURE WISH I KNEW WHAT THAT FLASH WAS. THE ONE THAT WENT OFF JUST BEFORE THE ROCKET EXPLODED!
I CANNOT SPEAK. I CANNOT BROADCAST.
THE ESCAPE MISSILE THAT CONTAINED THE ROCKET'S PROGRAM CENTER PROVES QUITE LIMITED IN ITS FUNCTIONS.
YET I CONTINUE. EVENTUALLY I WILL FIND A SYSTEM WITH WHICH TO INTERFACE.
EVENTUALLY I WILL GROW AGAIN.
AND SO MAX WILL IN GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ANNUAL #2! ON SALE NEXT WEEK!
END

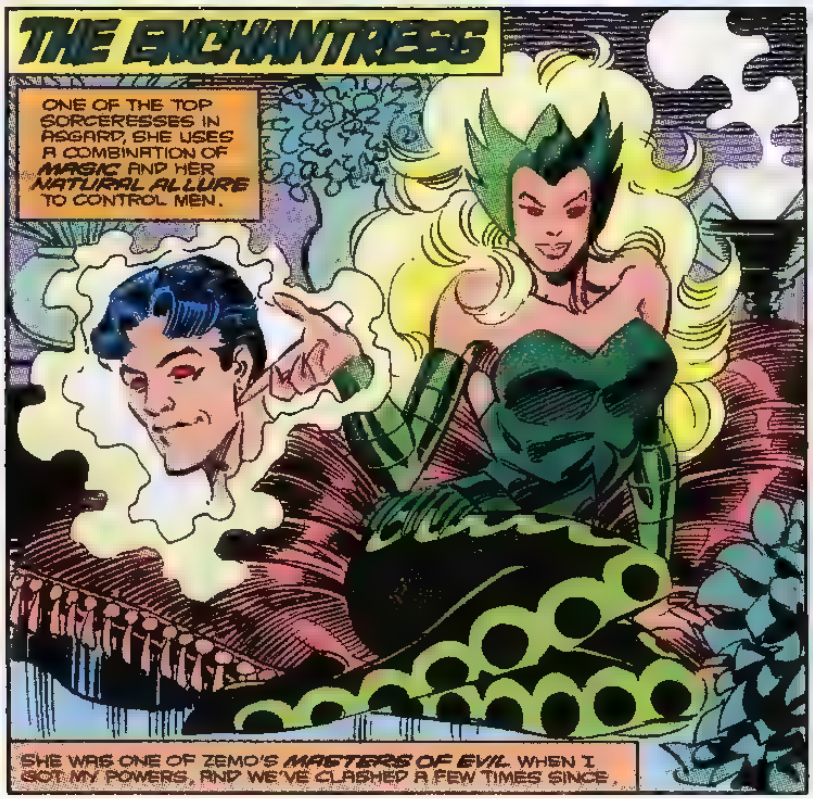
WHEN TITANS
GRUNT--?!

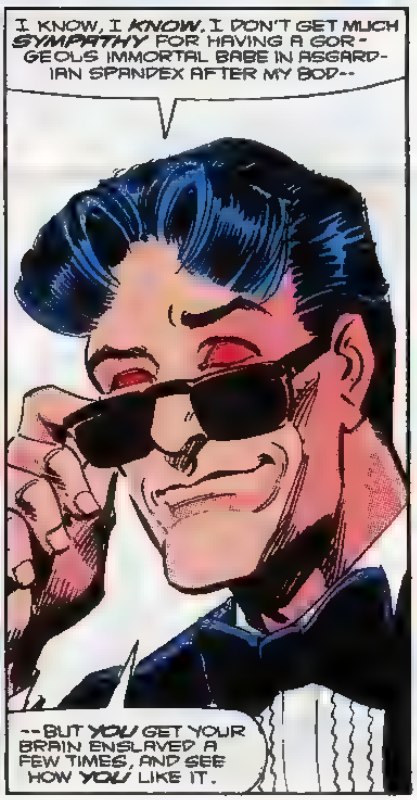

WELL, GOSH--THIS IS A SURPRISE!
I'D LIKE TO THANK THE ACADEMY, OF COURSE...


BUT RATHER THAN GO ON WITH THE USUAL LIST-- MY AGENT, DIRECTOR, ACTING COACH, CO-STARS, ALL THOSE GUYS--
--I THINK I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT -


MY TEN WORST VILLAINS
IT'LL BE A BREAK FROM ALL THE STANDARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES--
--AND BESIDES, THESE GUYS ARE, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE REASON I'M WHO AND WHAT I AM TODAY. OR AT LEAST SOME OF THEM ARE...
OSCAR
KURT BUSIEK WRITER / ART NICHOLS ARTIST / PAT BROSSEAU LETTERER / JOE ROSAS COLORIST


BARON ZEMO
TAKE BARON ZEMO, FOR EXAMPLE. HE'S THE LEFTOVER NAZI GENIUS WHO GAVE ME MY IONIC POWERS, AS PART OF A SCHEME TO DESTROY THE AVENGERS.
I WAS UP FOR THE IDEA, SINCE I WAS FACING A JAIL SENTENCE FOR EMBEZZLEMENT AT THE TIME, AND BLAMED ALL MY BUSINESS TROUBLES ON TONY STARK. BUT WITHOUT ZEMO, I'D BE NOTHING BUT A FAILED BUSINESSMAN TODAY.
HE'S DEAD NOW, BUT HE'S GOT A SON OR SOMETHING CARRYING ON THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

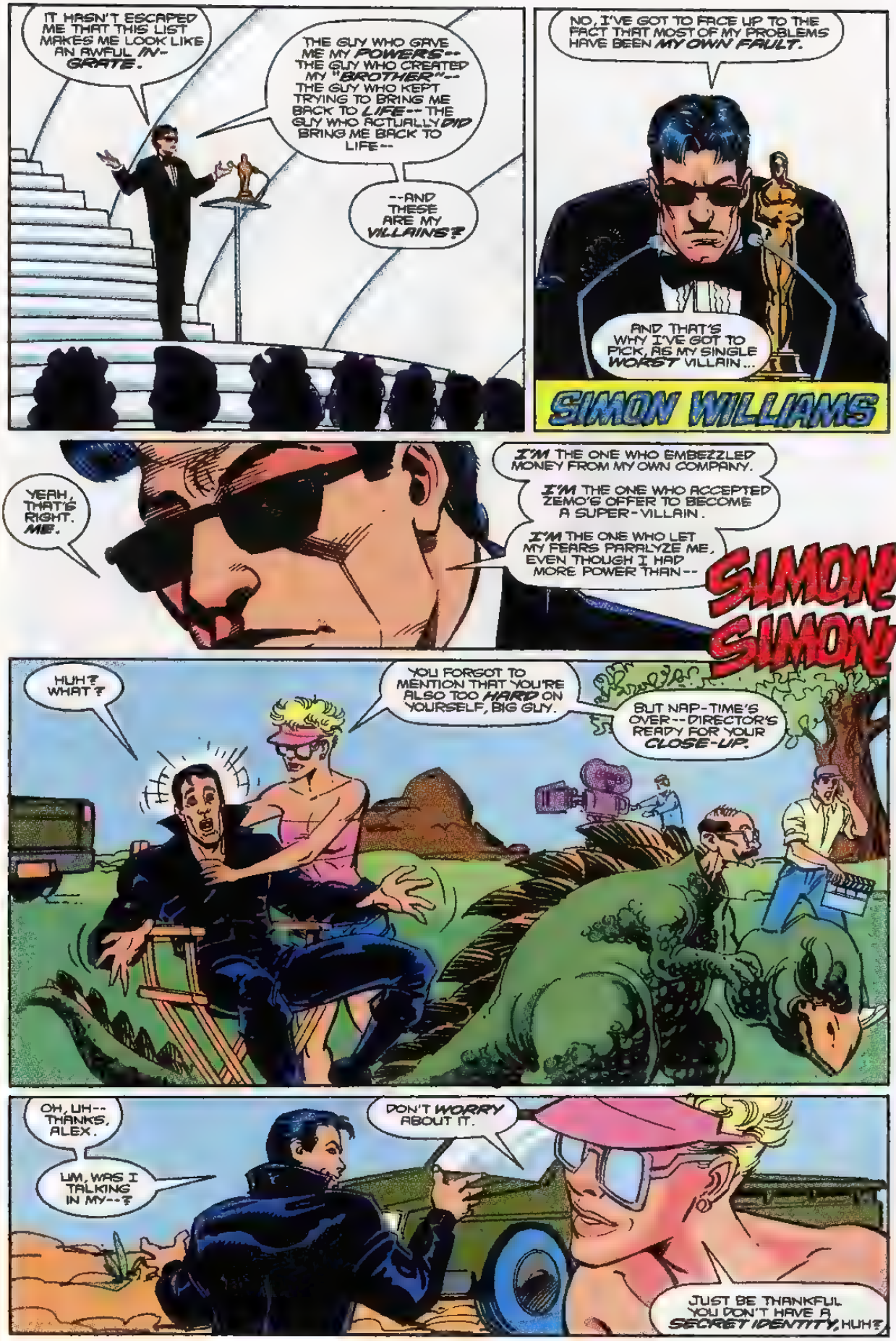

THE ENCHANTRESS
ONE OF THE TOP SORCERESSES IN ASGARD, SHE USES A COMBINATION OF MAGIC AND HER NATURAL ALLURE TO CONTROL MEN.
SHE WAS ONE OF ZEMO'S MASTERS OF EVIL WHEN I GOT MY POWERS, AND WE'VE CLASHED A FEW TIMES SINCE.


I KNOW, I KNOW. I DON'T GET MUCH SYMPATHY FOR HAVING A GORGEOUS IMMORTAL BABE IN ASGARDIAN SPANDEX AFTER MY BOD--
--BUT YOU GET YOUR BRAIN ENSLAVED A FEW TIMES, AND SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT.

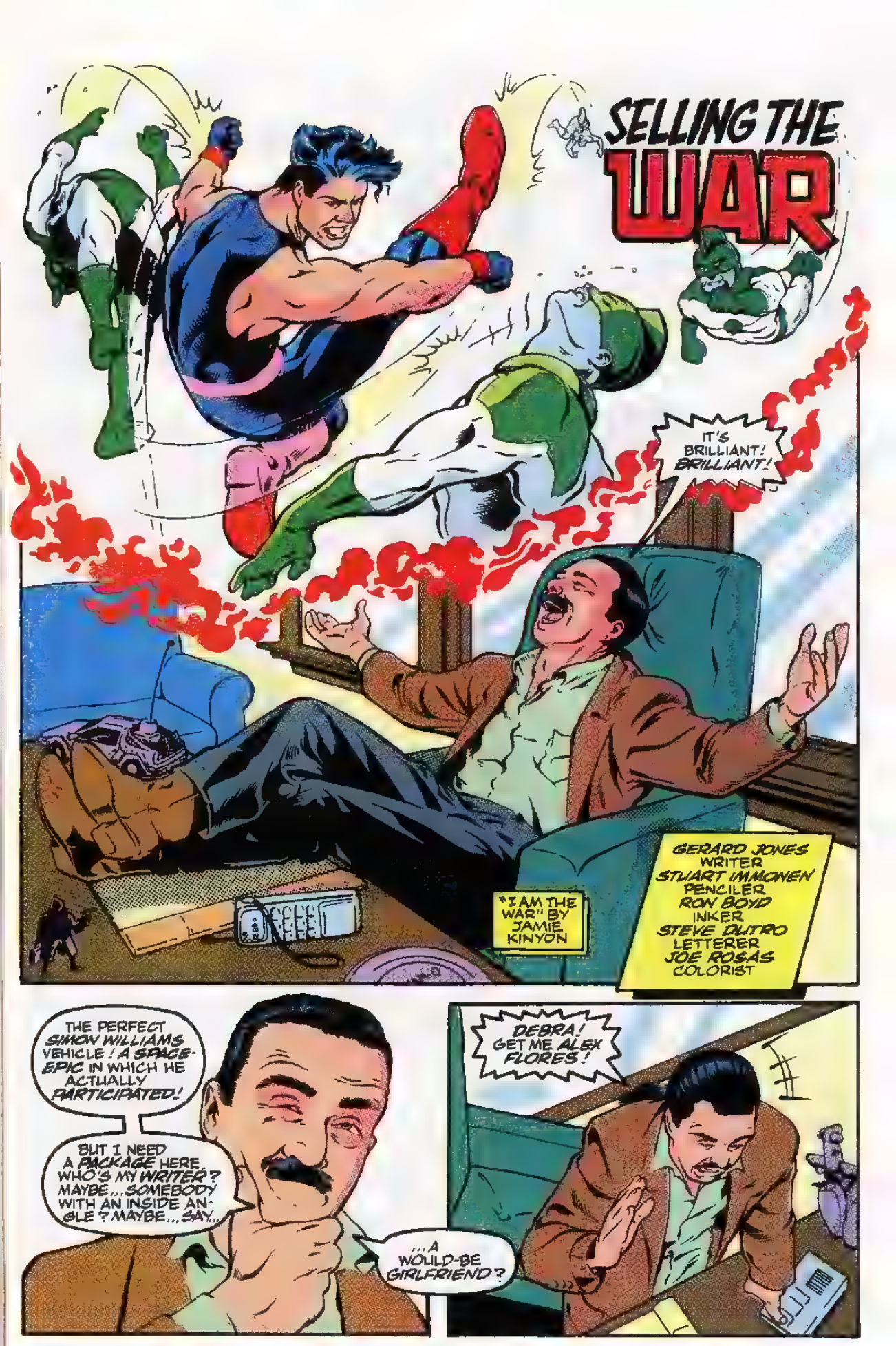
GOLIATH
STILL, I CLEARLY MADE A BIG IMPRESSION ON THE ENCHANTRESS RIGHT FROM THE START, BECAUSE WHILE I WAS "DEAD" FOR A FEW YEARS, SHE USED ZEMO'S MACHINES TO GIVE THIS GUY THE SAME TREATMENT I GOT.
HE HASN'T HAD MUCH OF A CAREER SINCE-- HE CALLED HIMSELF POWER MAN FOR A WHILE, THEN THE SMUGGLER, AND NOW HE'S GOT SIZE-CHANGING POWERS AND IS CALLED GOLIATH.
AND OF COURSE, HE BLAMES ME FOR HIS TROUBLES. GO FIGURE, RIGHT?
GRIM REAPER
MY BIG BROTHER ERIC. PROFESSIONAL CRIMINAL, OBSESSIVE SUPER-VILLAIN, AND NOW UNDEAD, SOUL-DEVOURING THING.
WHILE I WAS "DEAD"-- OR, TO BE ACCURATE, IN A DEATH-LIKE COMA-- HE SPLIT HIS TIME BETWEEN TRYING TO REVIVE ME AND TRYING TO DESTROY THE AVENGERS FOR "CAUSING" MY DEATH.
SINCE I CAME BACK TO LIFE, HE'S SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME TRYING TO KILL ME AGAIN. OKAY, SO IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE-- IT'S A FAMILY THING
ULTRON
A SUPER-INTELLIGENT MURDEROUS ROBOT WHO THINKS HUMANITY SHOULD BE ENSLAVED OR DESTROYED. AS AN AVENGER, I'VE FOUGHT HIM OFTEN, BUT THE MAIN REASON HE'S ON THE LIST IS FOR CREATING THE VISION.
HE USED MY BRAIN-PATTERNS AS THE BASIS FOR VIZH'S MIND. NOT A PROBLEM WHEN I WAS "DEAD," BUT NOWADAYS...
...WELL, LET'S JUST SAY WE HAVE SIMILAR TASTES IN WOMEN AND LET'S GO ON TO SOMETHING A LITTLE LIGHTER.

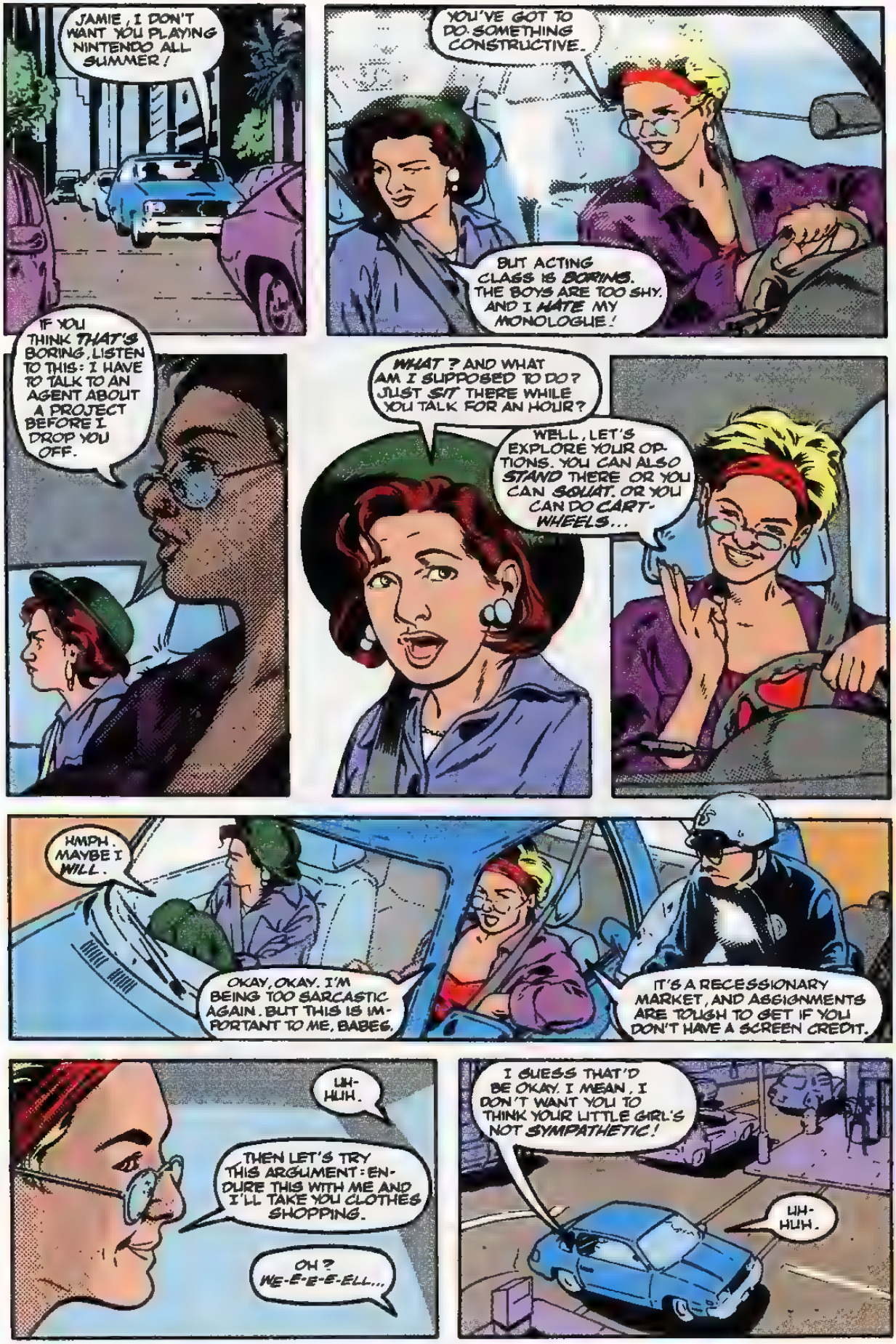
THE BLACK TALON
I LOVE THIS GUY.
I JUST LOVE THIS GUY.
HE'S MY FAVORITE. NO COMPETITION
I MEAN, FORGET THAT HE'S A HOUNGAN, A VOODOO PRIEST WHO CAN CREATE AND CONTROL ZOMBIES.
FORGET THAT HE'S THE GUY WHO BROUGHT ME BACK TO LIFE AFTER BEING "DEAD" FOR YEARS
FORGET THE FACT THAT HE'S TOUGH ENOUGH AND NASTY ENOUGH TO GIVE THE AVENGERS A GOOD FIGHT.
HOW MANY SUPER HEROES CAN SAY THAT ONE OF THEIR TOP VILLAINS IS A GUY WHO DRESSES LIKE A CHICKEN?
I JUST LOVE THIS GUY

AHEM. I CAN SEE SOME OF YOU THINKING, "WHO'S HE TO LAUGH AT A GUY DRESSED LIKE A CHICKEN WHEN HE USED TO DRESS LIKE A TURKEY?"
WHICH BRINGS US TO...
MY PAST COSTUME DESIGNERS
OR, AS I LIKE TO CALL THEM, "THE TRUE MASTERS OF EVIL."
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE, GUYS. NO NEED TO STAND UP.
HEY! I DESIGNED ONE OF THOSE OUTFITS!
I CHALLENGE YOU TO A LIFETIME OF BITTER HATRED!
SPLICE AND COUNT NEFARIA
BUT ENOUGH JOKES. I'LL JUST GO ON TO TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL FOES I EVER FACED--
SPLICE IS AN ASSASSIN FOR THE MOVIE INDUSTRY--AS SOME OF YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW--AHEM--
NEFARIA WAS JUST PLAIN TOUGH. STRENGTH, SPEED, KILLER EYE-BLASTS--HE HAD IT ALL, AND PLENTY OF IT, TOO.
FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE KEEPING SCORE, NEFARIA'S DEAD, SPLICE ISN'T.
SO. WHO'S NUMBER TEN?
THE GRIFFIN? THE EXECUTIONER? RED RONIN?
NAH.

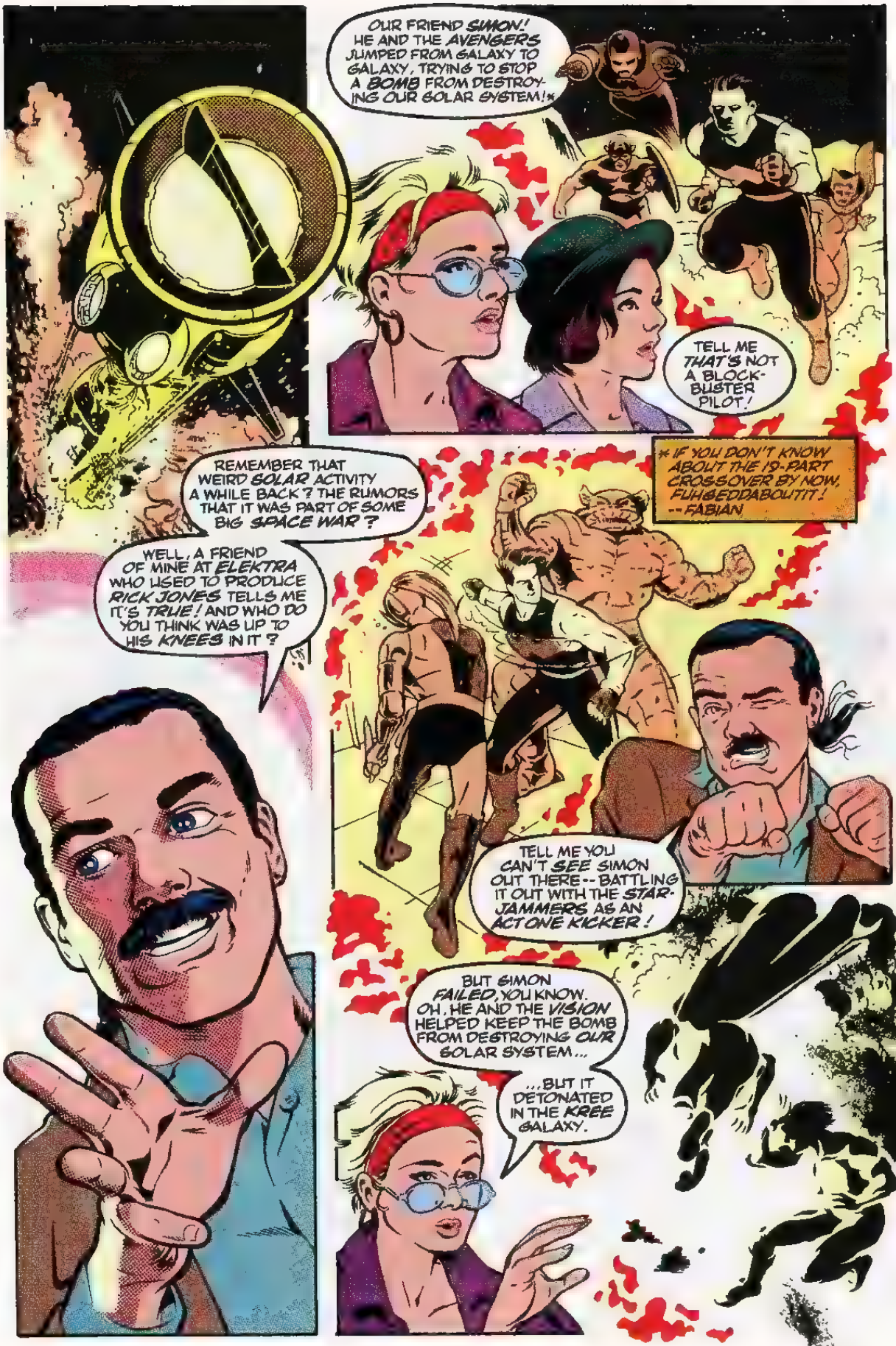

IT HASN'T ESCAPED ME THAT THIS LIST MAKES ME LOOK LIKE AN AWFUL IN-GRATE.
THE GUY WHO GAVE ME MY POWERS-- THE GUY WHO CREATED MY "BROTHER"-- THE GUY WHO KEPT TRYING TO BRING ME BACK TO LIFE-- THE GUY WHO ACTUALLY DID BRING ME BACK TO LIFE--
--AND THESE ARE MY VILLAINS?
NO, I'VE GOT TO FACE UP TO THE FACT THAT MOST OF MY PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN MY OWN FAULT.
AND THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT TO PICK, AS MY SINGLE WORST VILLAIN...
SIMON WILLIAMS
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT. ME.
I'M THE ONE WHO EMBEZZLED MONEY FROM MY OWN COMPANY.
I'M THE ONE WHO ACCEPTED ZEMO'S OFFER TO BECOME A SUPER-VILLAIN.
I'M THE ONE WHO LET MY FEARS PARALYZE ME, EVEN THOUGH I HAD MORE POWER THAN--
SIMON! SIMON!
HUH? WHAT?
YOU FORGOT TO MENTION THAT YOU'RE ALSO TOO HARD ON YOURSELF, BIG GUY.
BUT NAP-TIME'S OVER--DIRECTOR'S READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP.
OH, UH-- THANKS, ALEX.
UM, WAS I TALKING IN MY--?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
JUST BE THANKFUL YOU DON'T HAVE A SECRET IDENTITY, HUH?
~FIN~

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "WE'RE OUT OF GAS"?
SIMON & GINGER
REVVING UP THE ENGINES!
JOHNSON
BAIR


SELLING THE WAR
IT'S BRILLIANT! BRILLIANT!
"I AM THE WAR" BY JAMIE KINYON
GERARD JONES WRITER
STUART IMMONEN PENCILER
RON BOYD INKER
STEVE DUTRO LETTERER
JOE ROSAS COLORIST
THE PERFECT SIMON WILLIAMS VEHICLE! A SPACE-EPIC IN WHICH HE ACTUALLY PARTICIPATED!
BUT I NEED A PACKAGE HERE. WHO'S MY WRITER? MAYBE... SOMEBODY WITH AN INSIDE ANGLE? MAYBE... SAY...
...A WOULD-BE GIRLFRIEND?
DEBRA! GET ME ALEX FLORES!

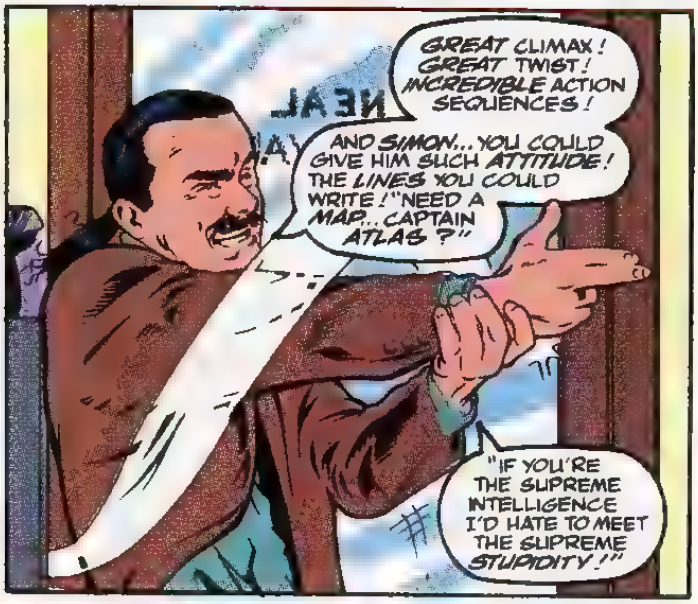

JAMIE, I DON'T WANT YOU PLAYING NINTENDO ALL SUMMER!
YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE.
BUT ACTING CLASS IS BORING. THE BOYS ARE TOO SHY, AND I HATE MY MONOLOGUE!
IF YOU THINK THAT'S BORING, LISTEN TO THIS: I HAVE TO TALK TO AN AGENT ABOUT A PROJECT BEFORE I DROP YOU OFF.
WHAT? AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? JUST SIT THERE WHILE YOU TALK FOR AN HOUR?
WELL, LET'S EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS. YOU CAN ALSO STAND THERE OR YOU CAN SQUAT. OR YOU CAN DO CARTWHEELS...
HMPH. MAYBE I WILL.
OKAY, OKAY. I'M BEING TOO SARCASTIC AGAIN. BUT THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME, BABES.
IT'S A RECESSIONARY MARKET, AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE TOUGH TO GET IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SCREEN CREDIT.
UH-HUH.
THEN LET'S TRY THIS ARGUMENT: ENDURE THIS WITH ME AND I'LL TAKE YOU CLOTHES SHOPPING.
OH? WE-E-E-E-ELL...
I GUESS THAT'D BE OKAY. I MEAN, I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK YOUR LITTLE GIRL'S NOT SYMPATHETIC!
UH-HUH.

ALEX FLORES! I CAN'T BELIEVE I FINALLY GET TO MEET YOU! SIMON JUST RAVES ABOUT YOU!
MMM. I JUST BET HE DOES.
THIS MUST BE YOUR KID! SIT! BE COMFORTABLE! LOOK HERE! I'M JUST A BIG KID MYSELF! PLAY WITH ANYTHING YOU WANT!
I'M SORRY I DON'T HAVE ANY BARBIE DOLLS. IS THAT OKAY? I CAN SEND MY GIRL OUT FOR SOME...
I... UH... I THINK I CAN LIVE WITHOUT BARBIE DOLLS FOR A FEW MINUTES.
BARBIE DOLLS!
FIRST THING I GOTTA KNOW, ALEX. WHO'S YOUR AGENT?
JOEL MILNER.
JOEL?! OH MY GOSH. I LOVE JOEL! HE'S LIKE FAMILY!
BUT YOU KNOW, ALEX... I'M NOT SURE HE'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED.
RIGHT, NEAL. HE'S LIKE FAMILY...
...BUT YOU'RE RAIDING HIS CLIENTS?
IF YOU'RE SURE SIMON WOULD WANT IT THAT WAY, WHY DID YOU CONTACT ME WHILE HE'S OUT OF TOWN?
RAIDING?! YOU THINK I'M RAIDING HERE? ALEX, NO!
IT'S JUST THAT WE HAVE THE PERFECT CHEMISTRY HERE! WONDER MAN PLAYING WONDER MAN... WONDER MAN'S FRIEND WRITING WONDER MAN...
...SIMON WOULD WANT IT THIS WAY!
HEY, HEY. IT'S... IT'S A LITTLE BIT DELICATE.


OUR FRIEND SIMON! HE AND THE AVENGERS JUMPED FROM GALAXY TO GALAXY, TRYING TO STOP A BOMB FROM DESTROYING OUR SOLAR SYSTEM!*
TELL ME THAT'S NOT A BLOCKBUSTER PILOT!
* IF YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE 13-PART CROSSOVER BY NOW, FUHGEDDABOUTIT! -- FABIAN
REMEMBER THAT WEIRD SOLAR ACTIVITY A WHILE BACK? THE RUMORS THAT IT WAS PART OF SOME BIG SPACE WAR?
WELL, A FRIEND OF MINE AT ELEKTRA WHO USED TO PRODUCE RICK JONES TELLS ME IT'S TRUE! AND WHO DO YOU THINK WAS UP TO HIS KNEES IN IT?
TELL ME YOU CAN'T SEE SIMON OUT THERE -- BATTLING IT OUT WITH THE STARJAMMERS AS AN ACT ONE KICKER!
BUT SIMON FAILED, YOU KNOW. OH, HE AND THE VISION HELPED KEEP THE BOMB FROM DESTROYING OUR SOLAR SYSTEM...
...BUT IT DETONATED IN THE KREE GALAXY.

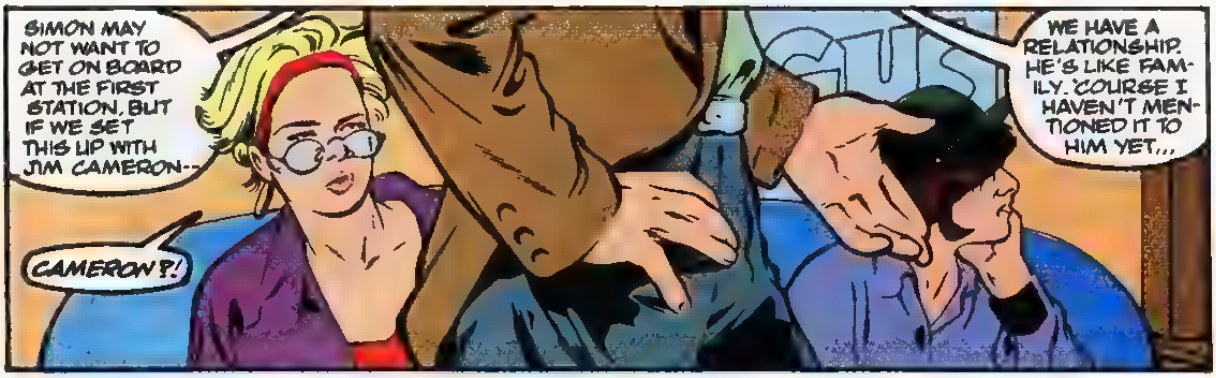
SIMON TELLS ME HE'S STILL HAUNTED BY THE SCREAMS OF THE KREE... BILLIONS OF THEM...
...SLAUGHTERED BY THE MACHINATIONS OF THEIR OWN "SUPREME INTELLIGENCE."*
*SEE WONDER MAN #10.--ME AGAIN

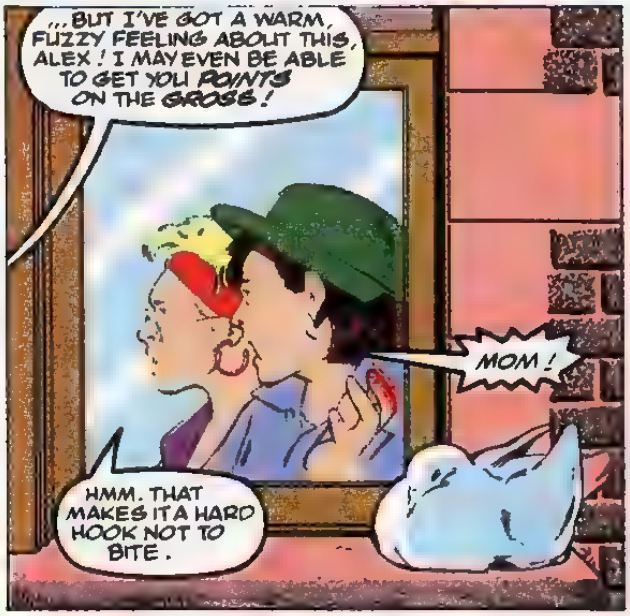
IT'S FANTASTIC!
FANTASTIC?! BUT ALL THOSE KREE--


GREAT CLIMAX! GREAT TWIST! INCREDIBLE ACTION SEQUENCES!
AND SIMON... YOU COULD GIVE HIM SUCH ATTITUDE! THE LINES YOU COULD WRITE! "NEED A MAP... CAPTAIN ATLAS?"
"IF YOU'RE THE SUPREME INTELLIGENCE I'D HATE TO MEET THE SUPREME STUPIDITY!"

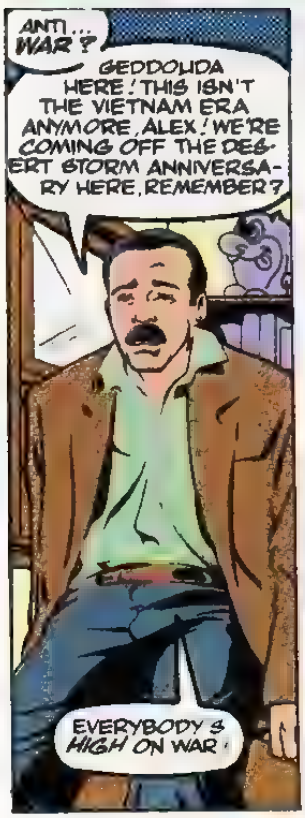
YEAH, WELL, THERE ARE PROBABLY SOME GOOD LINES IN THERE SOMEWHERE.
AND YOU'RE GOING TO WRITE THEM!

SIMON WON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT IT. SAYS THERE ARE TOO MANY EMOTIONS. BUT YOU HE TALKS TO!
Bill & Ted's
GUS
YOU'RE THE ONE TO WRITE "OPERATION: GALACTIC STORM"!
HOW'S THAT FOR A TITLE, HUH?!


SIMON MAY NOT WANT TO GET ON BOARD AT THE FIRST STATION, BUT IF WE SET THIS UP WITH JIM CAMERON--
CAMERON?!
WE HAVE A RELATIONSHIP. HE'S LIKE FAMILY. 'COURSE I HAVEN'T MENTIONED IT TO HIM YET...


...BUT I'VE GOT A WARM, FUZZY FEELING ABOUT THIS, ALEX! I MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO GET YOU POINTS ON THE GROSS!
MOM!
HMM. THAT MAKES IT A HARD HOOK NOT TO BITE.

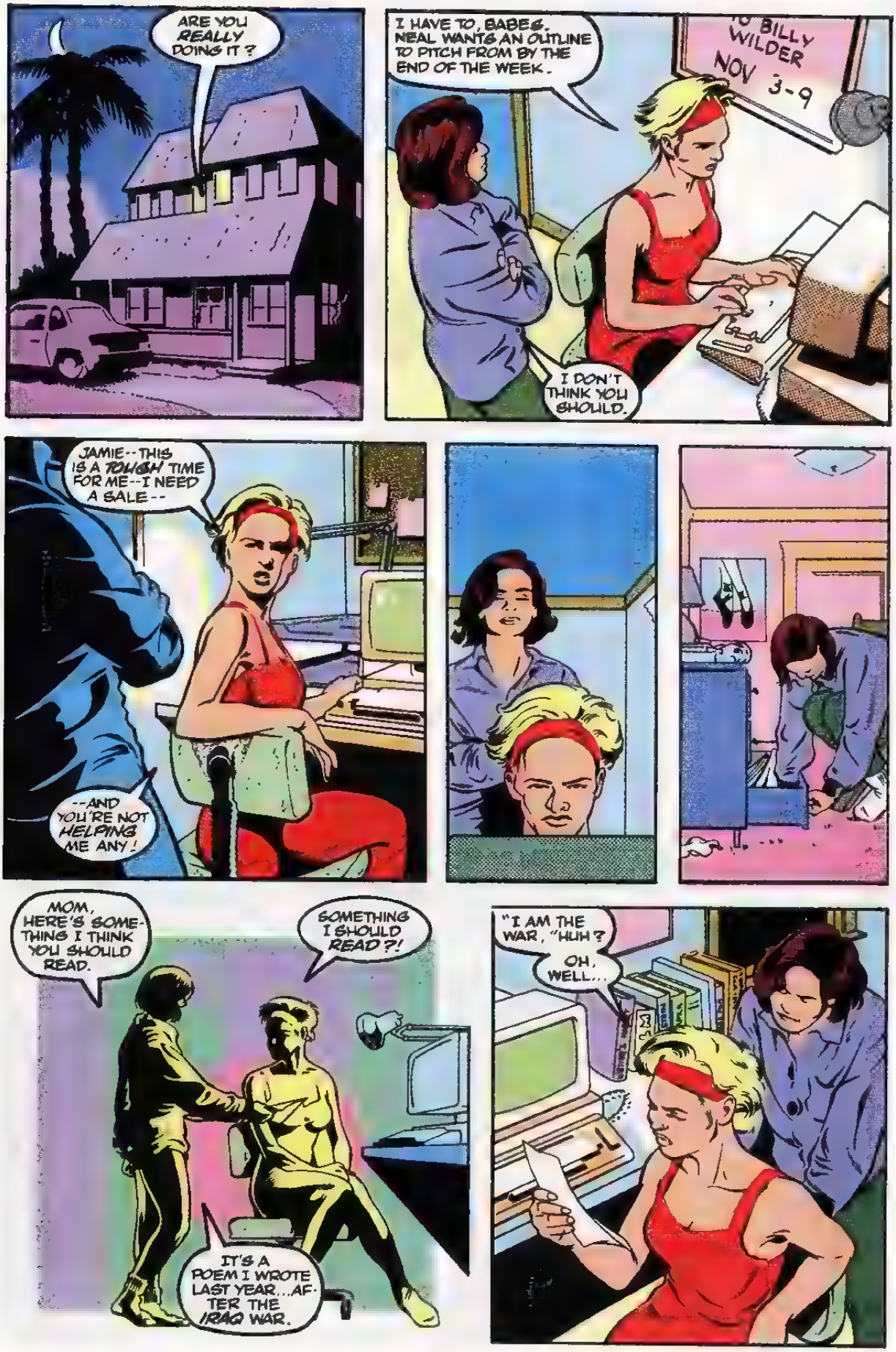
BUT HOW ABOUT... IF I TRY TO GIVE IT AN ANTI-WAR SPIN?


ANTI... WAR?
GEDDOUDA HERE! THIS ISN'T THE VIETNAM ERA ANYMORE, ALEX! WE'RE COMING OFF THE DESERT STORM ANNIVERSARY HERE, REMEMBER?
EVERYBODY'S HIGH ON WAR!

AND THIS WAS A GREAT WAR! KEPT OUR SOLAR SYSTEM CLEAN-- NOTHING HAPPENED TO OUR SIDE--NOBODY DIED BUT KREE--
--WHOEVER THEY ARE!

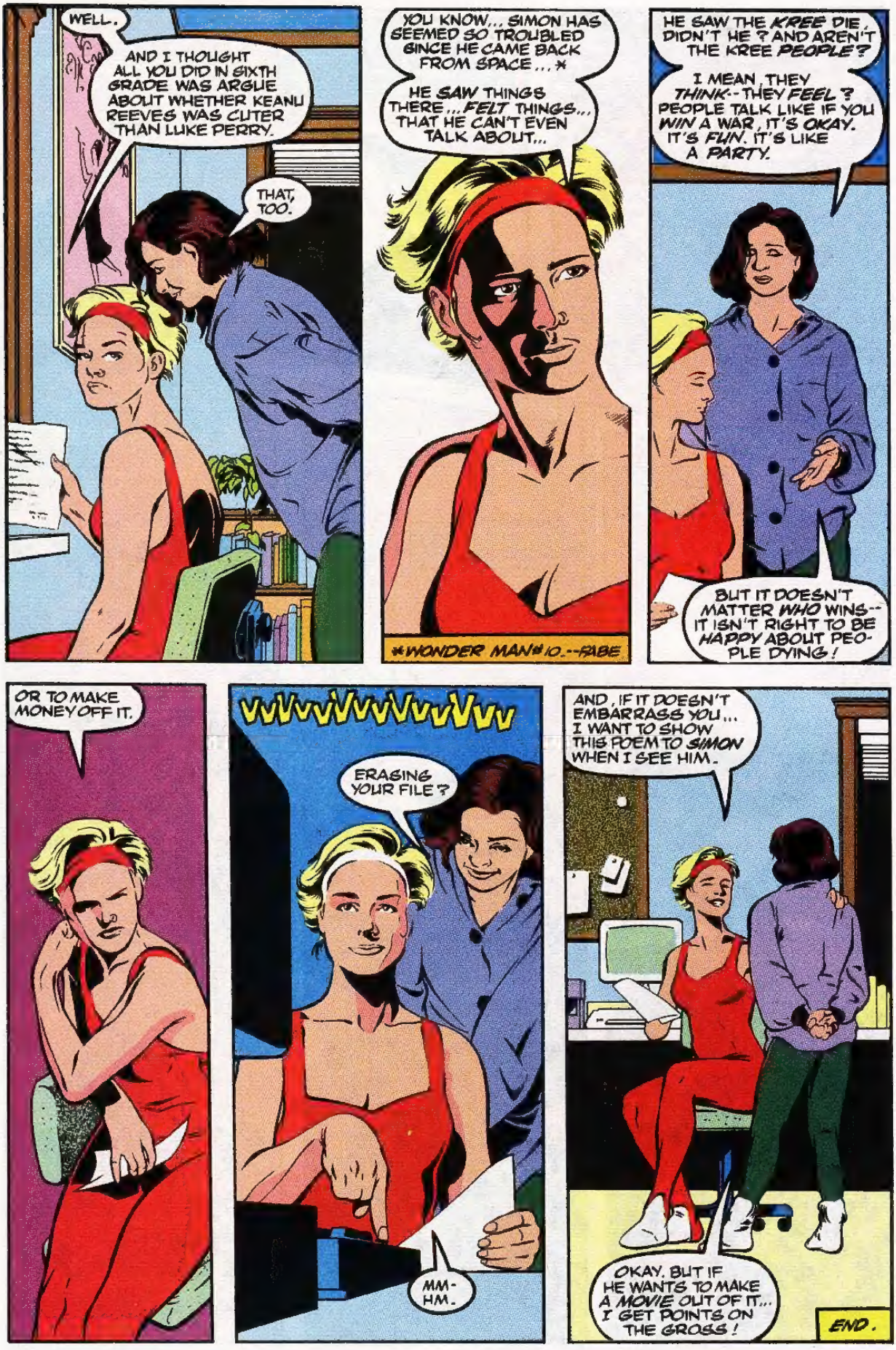
IT'S A CONCEPT WAITING FOR A MARKET!

ALEX, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN SAY NO!


ARE YOU REALLY DOING IT?
I HAVE TO, BABES. NEAL WANTS AN OUTLINE TO PITCH FROM BY THE END OF THE WEEK.
TO BILLY WILDER NOV 3-9
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD.
JAMIE--THIS IS A ROUGH TIME FOR ME--I NEED A SALE--
--AND YOU'RE NOT HELPING ME ANY!
MOM, HERE'S SOMETHING I THINK YOU SHOULD READ.
SOMETHING I SHOULD READ?!
IT'S A POEM I WROTE LAST YEAR...AFTER THE IRAQ WAR.
"I AM THE WAR," "HUH?
OH, WELL...

"I AM THE WAR. THE HATE, THE EVIL.
"I AM THE DEATH OF THE PEOPLE.
"I AM THE DEVIL--READY TO KILL MY NEXT VICTIM. I AM NOT GIVING UP. I MUST HAVE MY WAY. THE ONLY WAY IS TO KILL--
"ISN'T IT?
"I AM THE BLOOD. I SEE IT. I SMELL IT. I CAN FEEL THE PAIN.
"BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAY.
"I WON'T SHAKE HANDS WITH MY MAKER. I WON'T MAKE PEACE UNTIL I AM HAPPY.
"I WON'T BE DEFEATED--

"--WILL I ?
"NO. I AM STRONG. I AM THE WAR. IN MY DREAMS I AM DONE FOR -- THEY HAVE WON PEACE.
"I AM A NIGHTMARE.
"I AM A BOMB-- A MISSILE --
"I AM PROUD."


WELL.
AND I THOUGHT ALL YOU DID IN SIXTH GRADE WAS ARGUE ABOUT WHETHER KEANU REEVES WAS CUTER THAN LUKE PERRY.
THAT, TOO.
YOU KNOW... SIMON HAS SEEMED SO TROUBLED SINCE HE CAME BACK FROM SPACE...*
HE SAW THINGS THERE... FELT THINGS... THAT HE CAN'T EVEN TALK ABOUT...
*WONDER MAN #10.--FABE
HE SAW THE KREE DIE, DIDN'T HE? AND AREN'T THE KREE PEOPLE?
I MEAN, THEY THINK--THEY FEEL? PEOPLE TALK LIKE IF YOU WIN A WAR, IT'S OKAY. IT'S FUN. IT'S LIKE A PARTY.
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO WINS--IT ISN'T RIGHT TO BE HAPPY ABOUT PEOPLE DYING!
OR TO MAKE MONEY OFF IT.
VvVvvVvvVvvVvv
ERASING YOUR FILE?
MM-HM.
AND, IF IT DOESN'T EMBARRASS YOU... I WANT TO SHOW THIS POEM TO SIMON WHEN I SEE HIM.
OKAY. BUT IF HE WANTS TO MAKE A MOVIE OUT OF IT... I GET POINTS ON THE GROSS!
END.

SIMON SAYS

FABIAN NICIEZA
Editor
EVAN SKOLNICK
Assistant Editor

Write to: SIMON SAYS c/o Marvel Entertainment Group 387 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10016
Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

Aloha, Wonderfans, it's been a whole year. Does it show? Is that easy-going relationship of ours reaching the point of complacency? Are we eating in more, going out less? What's the deal? Well, here it is *our* anniversary and *we* got you this 64-page gem, and what did *you* get us? What is that? Two bucks and change? You shouldn't have!

Well, the lights are down, the music's playing, let's take a walk down memory lane. Here are some of your thoughts from throughout our twelve months o'bliss. We've cut your lengthy diatribes to brief little love nibbles, because, hey, we just love it when you're bite-sized!

Dear Wonder Staff,

You are off to a great start! I really enjoy the one-shot stories, and even the two-parter in issues #5 and #6. Please try to stay away from multi-part storylines that have been so common in all your other books.

I must compliment Jeff Johnson on his wonderful artwork. His style is very fresh and clean. It will be interesting to see how he handles future guest stars. I thought the Beast never looked better.

Also, the writing has been fantastic. Gerard Jones's dialogue is very witty and imaginative. The balance of humor and action is perfect. The book doesn't have to be a slugfest from cover to cover.

Paul Melvan
(Address withheld upon request)

How would Jeff handle future guest stars? Well, wait no more, Paul! Just check out a copy of WONDER MAN #13 and see Jeff take on blamed near *everyone* in the mighty Marvel Universe! We kid you not.

Dear Wonder-ful people,

First a few comments on my number one favorite comic book of all time. . .which happens to be yours.

1. The writing is fun, witty, and quite dramatic in certain areas. Jones really outdoes himself.

2. With Jones's storytelling ability added with Johnson's pencils, I'd even say he surpasses Jim Lee.

3. The inking, lettering, and coloring speak for themselves — absolutely perfect!

By the way — am I the only person on this planet who notices that Spider's glasses keep changing? Just wonderin'.

Paul T. Morgan
10718 Ave. C
Chicago, IL 60617

If you were *really* observant, Paul, you'd notice that Spider also keeps changing his shoes for nearly identical pairs.

Dear Wonder Crew,

Splice is cool! So keep him! And have Wondy go with Alex! I just hate ditsy, brainless bimbos like Ginger! Although I like her little brother, Spider! So toss out Ginger and keep Splice, Spider, Alex, and the Beast.

Jeremy F. Haden
3101 Jo Ann Ave.
Omaha, NE 68123

Ginger — brainless? Ditsy? A bimbo? Getting a little harsh there, eh, Jeremy? Give her a break! Just 'cause she's incredibly gorgeous doesn't mean that she's depth-less! That's the same kind of prejudice Simon's faced in the past. And *now* look at him — brimming with depth! Depth! Depth, we tell you! More depth than you can take a bathysphere into!

Simon Says,
My vote is for Simon & Alex!

Todd Maxwell
3230 Overland Ave. #203
Los Angeles, CA 90034

Cheez, man! Another fan who wants Simon to hook up with the brainy chick in our star-crossed Simon/Alex/Ginger love triangle. Why can't you people favor the ditsy bimbo?!

Hey Fabian,

The more I see Alex, the more I find myself liking her character. She's an attractive, intelligent, caring individual. Ginger, on the other hand, has *got* to go. She might be a total babe but she's absolutely brain dead. She's just not worth it.

Uncle Elvis
17650 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408

Sheesh!

Dear Wonder Men,

First off, let me start by saying that this is one of the best titles currently being published by Marvel. It's witty and original. Gerard Jones's writing talents rank right up there with the best in the field. Way to be, Gerard! Secondly, let me compliment Jeff Johnson's pencils. YOW! This is some fantastic art. I hope both Gerard and Jeff stay on for the long haul. Now on to some suggestions:

1. Keep Spider! I kinda like the little guy.

2. Ginger! Ginger! Ginger! She is the only woman (in my opinion) deserving of Simon's affections.

3. Should the Beast guest-star again — please keep him in a battle situation a bit longer than you did last time. Ol' Hank is a lot stronger than he looks.

Well, keep up the good work, and I'll keep buying!

Dan Martin
708 Dowdell Ave.
Xenia, OH 45385

Ginger? Dan, what are you thinking? What about poor Alex? She's got a great sense of humor, values, and goals. She's interesting and insightful. If you can't appreciate all the wonderful qualities she has, then that's your loss, not hers. (Just playing devil's advocate there, Todd. Ginger! Way to go, hon!)

Dear Wonder People,

Alex or Ginger? Simon Williams & Alex, and Wonder Man & Ginger. Makes sense. This *is* Hollywood we're talking about.

Andy R. Dabydeen
5 Mayfair Cres
Brampton, Ont.
Canada L6S 3N3

Andy, Andy, Andy. . .that may be the way they do things in Ontario, but let us tell you something, mister, that's just plain immoral and sick! Excellent! We'll pass it on to Gerard.

Yo Crew!

What's new? It took me a while but I finally found WONDER MAN #1. It was great! I just need issue #3 and I'll have the whole collection so far.

What's with Ginger and Alex? Is there going to be competition between the two?

I think that it stunk that Wonder Man was in the arcade game *Captain America and the Avengers* for only a few seconds.

Robert Schiavetta
615 Oak Neck Road
West Islip, NY 11795

It did not "stink," Robert. Wondy may have had only a "cameo" role in *Captain America and the Avengers* arcade game, yet he was instrumental in advancing the story's multi-layered plot to its epic soul-searching conclusion. Remember, Robert, there are no small arcade game roles, only small arcade game *actors*.

Dear Wondy,

I like your character, my friends and I like to play the video game "Captain America and the Avengers." But I don't know why you just say "Okay, go!"

Will Alex be your girlfriend? I like her. You two are a great couple, but the Scarlet Witch is more suited for you, 'cause she's an Avenger too.

"Okay, go!"

Stanley Wong
B, 3/F, Hon Kwong Mansion
#25 Hankow Rd.
T.S.T., Hong Kong

"Okay go!"? All right. There *are* small parts. But what's this with the Scarlet Witch? Don't tell us our love triangle just turned into a love rectangle. . .

Well, that's it for our first annual. But be sure to tune in for WONDER MAN #12 as Wondy's awesome, angst-ridden assault against Angkor apexes in an epic ending. Also an itsy appearance of everyone's anti-east-side Avengers. Aha.

Then, in WONDER MAN #13, we have just two words for you: INFINITY WAR! But wait, that's not all! What if we threw in guest stars Hercules and Thor? Now how much would you pay? But there's *still* more! Dark Wonder Man versus his evil twin! Does that make sense? Who cares, it's cool! Be there!